Implementing A Spiritual Formation Program In The North Miami Seventh-day Adventist Church

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ABSTRACT

IMPLEMENTING A SPIRITUAL FORMATION PROGRAM IN THE NORTH MIAMI BEACH SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

Grigore Leordean

Adviser: Walt Williams
Title: IMPLEMENTING A SPIRITUAL FORMATION PROGRAM IN THE NORTH MIAMI BEACH SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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Date completed: April 2008

Problem

From 1986 to 2005, the North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church has never been exposed to spiritual formation. The poor inadequate knowledge of church members as to how to practice the presence of God on a daily basis and the lack of numerical and spiritual growth, along with the unfulfilled goals of the founding members of the church, called for special and immediate action. The purpose of this project was to develop and implement a spiritual formation program in the church and address this deep spiritual need that had not been met over the years.

Method

A nine-month process in two stages began with an assessment of spiritual needs
of the congregation and a review of church history. A group of twenty church members
was exposed to a significant number of specific seminars on spirituality and was
introduced to the concept of practicing the presence of God through the use of spiritual
disciplines. Time of reflection on God’s presence in their personal history, along with
weekly meetings which involved prayer, spiritual topics, spiritual disciplines, discussions
and a specific program to follow during every week took the participants on a new
journey of Christian life. All of these along with a special spiritual inventory, ten days of
prayer and fasting for the Holy Spirit, and direct involvement in two evangelistic
crusades were meant to teach and train the participants in the biblical practices of
spiritual growth and to help them develop an authentic and permanent relationship with
God.

Results

At the conclusion of the spiritual formation program of the nine-month time
period, the church had witnessed positive changes. A new spiritual mindset seems to
characterize an increasing number of members. Based upon the evaluation process and
personal testimonies, all participants seemed to have experienced new ideas in their
relationship with God. Their understanding on the meaning and importance of spirituality
has improved considerably, and their determination to continue the process of spiritual
formation is remarkable. Since the program began, to its completion, twenty-eight
persons were baptized in the church and two were added by profession of faith. This
number is very close to the number of baptisms over the previous ten years. A seven year
decline in church membership had been reversed.
Conclusions

The project was effective in attaining an important level of understanding of spirituality and in achieving a personal involvement in the process of spiritual formation. It is evident that the spiritual formation program brought about a new spiritual atmosphere in the church. A number of church members testify to spiritual growth in their lives that perhaps otherwise could not take place. The process of change that took place at North Miami Beach SDA Church with the twenty participants in the program has the potential to spread over the entire congregation and may also serve as a model to other local churches wishing to develop a relationship with God that is genuine, biblical, permanent and rewarding.
Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

IMPLEMENTING A SPIRITUAL FORMATION PROGRAM IN THE
NORTH MIAMI BEACH SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

By
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April 18, 2008
Dedicated to Dezideriu Faluvegi, the man I most admire in my homeland country of Romania, and whose impact in my life will last as long as I live.

He is the theologian, pastor, teacher, and Christian I always wanted to emulate.

He is the first spiritual mentor who taught me how to pray the Word of God and how to live an effective spiritual life among those God sent me to minister to.

His pearl of pastoral authenticity is still my treasure of inspiration: “To me, my happiness is to be a pastor.”

He is the first teacher of whom my colleagues earnestly said: “He has the anointing.”

He is my precious father-in-law—a man whose presence generates an overflowing sense of comfort and joy equaled only to that of my own parents during the best days of my childhood.

He is the only person who ever addressed me with the greeting: “My beloved Grig;”

He is my genuine friend who, during one of our last moments of prayer together, wrapped his arms around me and said: “I want to tell you something I have never told you, Grig, I truly love you!”

He is the man of God from whom I wish I could receive a double portion of the Spirit God gave him—a man I dearly love and whose life on this earth I wish would never end.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I humbly thank my God and Lord Jesus Christ for His immeasurable love manifested to a sinner like me; for His perfect spiritual example, for His ongoing wisdom and help, and for His permission to approach the unapproachable—the holy realm of spirituality. The weakness and imperfections in this work in no way reflect His spirituality and guidance.

Thanks to Drs. Walt Williams and Joe Kidder, my wonderful, precious advisers, for their prayers, time, interest, and very helpful feedback and guidance in the production of this work. I do not remember a time when I left their office without being blessed. And I will always remember with admiration and thankfulness how Dr. Williams entered into the very heart of this project, spending entire days to ponder my thoughts, to adjust my often sermonizing style, and to correct or improve my less than perfect English.

Thanks also to Dr. Jon Dybdahl for his valuable contribution as a spiritual theological teacher. His classes in spiritual formation were my first and most foundational in developing my own understanding of spiritual formation.

Thanks to Dr. Ricardo Norton for his Christian friendship and for his guidance and help in the process of preparing the proposal. He was the first person to help me into the D.Min. Program and the teacher who always found time to encourage and help.

Thanks to Dr. Ben Maxson for his excellent seminars on spirituality and for his time. The depth of his insights, his brotherly care, his guidance and patience brought me to a higher level of understanding and experiencing true spirituality.

Thanks to the leadership of the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and for their special support along this journey.

Thanks to the North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church for giving me the opportunity to have this spiritual experiment in their midst and for their love and support along the way.

Thanks to Davalyn and Dale Rhodes for their support in prayer and precious editorial assistance. Thanks to Maria, Vio, and Oti for their valuable help and assistance in gathering some of the data for this work. And special thanks to Linda Bauer for her expert editorial help in the production of this work.

Thanks to my wife, Laura, for her support and remarkable example of hard work which has been such an inspiration to me.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Since North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church was established in 1988, there has never been an intentional and systematic spiritual formation program held for church members. Although the church as a whole expresses high appreciation for the Word of God and enjoys attending spiritual meetings, it seems that a profound spiritual need is not met. Both old and new members know little of how to practice the presence of God on a daily basis. The spiritual well-being of many members is suffering and the mission of the church is affected.

Purpose of the Dissertation

It was the purpose of this project to:

1. Assess the spiritual state of North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church members.

2. Develop a workable spiritual formation program in the North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church.

3. Implement the spiritual formation program by leading a select group of twenty church members to a better understanding of spiritual life and how to practice God’s
presence in their lives on a daily basis, and how to experience a deeper and authentic spirituality.

4. To evaluate the results.

**Justification for the Dissertation**

The North Miami Beach SDA Church was selected for this project for a number of reasons.

1. The church was established in 1988 in the city of North Miami Beach in a very strategic location without any Seventh-day Adventist presence. One main reason for the project is to reach out to the community with the message of the Gospel.

2. It is composed of twenty-two nationalities and offers a large spectrum of spiritual interest.

3. It had regular meetings for more than eighteen years in an old rented facility that did not provide the appropriate environment for an atmosphere of worship, and members would move to other churches almost every year.

4. It was in the process of moving to its own property and building its own church facility, a project that involved a new beginning in the history of the church and needed a new emphasis on spirituality.

5. Though its goal was to reach out to others, and the efforts that have been made toward its fulfillment have not brought the abundance of fruit as expected, it is still the church that is more open to mission and is ready, first of all, to learn how to meet the spiritual conditions.

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1North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church is made up of twenty-two nationalities.
Therefore, the justifications for the project were as follows:

1. It was believed by an overwhelming majority of the church family that the Bible teaches and requires that God's people be authentically spiritual.

2. It was confirmed through research that both the story of creation and the plan of salvation show God's intention and longing for an ongoing relationship with His people. The spiritual formation program was meant as a solution to that biblical revelation.

3. It was also confirmed from the writings of Ellen G. White that a revival of true godliness among God's people is the greatest and most urgent of all the existing needs and that true and constant communion with God will ennoble the character and the life and bring that needed revival.

4. There were evident signs of hunger and thirst among the members of North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church for a deeper and more meaningful walk with God. What was conveyed by the Word of God and what was observed from Ellen G. White's writings were not accepted only as a biblical statement or a prophetic fact, but also there was a realization among members that, yes, a spiritual revival was necessary.

5. It was assumed that it was the researcher's responsibility, as pastor of North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church, to address and respond to the needs of his congregation by developing and implementing a spiritual formation program in the church.
Definition of Terms

_Spirituality_ is a term that refers to "the holistic quality of human life."² In this paper it is defined as a restored relationship with God by faith in Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the Cross, under the work and indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the human heart, and nurtured and developed upon the Word of God through the practice of spiritual disciplines.

_Spiritual man_ is a biblical expression which describes the character of one whose life is renewed and controlled by the Spirit (1 Cor 2:12, 15). The term will be used in this paper as referring to both genders—male and female.

_Spiritual formation_ refers to a process through which the relationship with God is nurtured and His presence practiced. "It is the movement of the entire life towards God, opening every area of life to intimacy with God and allowing Him to do His will."³

_Spiritual disciplines_ is a reference of the spiritual means to spirituality. They represent "the heart"⁴ of spiritual formation and are "tools of discipleship"⁵ that promote

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³Ben Maxson, _Principles of Stewardship_ (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Stewardship Department, 1988), 23.


⁵Ben Maxson, _Seeking God's Heart: A Discipling and Spiritual Formation Seminar_ (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2002), 3.
spiritual growth and help the spiritual person to focus on Christ and integrate Him in every area of his life.

*Image of God* is the perfect spiritual character with which God created man and to which man is conformed again in the process of spiritual formation. It involves a "state of original purity" in which the human being is "depicted as fashioned for rational, moral and spiritual fellowship with his Maker."

*Practicing the presence of God* is the deep spiritual experience of one whose main commitment and passion is to live in constant communion with God all the time and in every circumstance of life.

*Holiness* is "the fundamental characteristic of God" that points to His unique and divine sacredness and refers to His spotless character—His moral perfection. When holiness refers to humankind, it is associated with God and involves separation, "some thing, some place or some one who is sacred, consecrated, set apart, or dedicated to God."

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Limitations of the Dissertation

It should be noted that there were naturally a number of limiting factors present throughout the project. They may be summarized as follows:

1. Time factors: The dissertation process and the duration of the project had an added element of limitation in both time and scope. It was the intent of the project to take about four months. Due to some additional events—some of them unscheduled and totally unexpected, a decision was made that another period of four to five months would be added to the program later on. The first stage was between October 2005 to February 2006, and the second stage between October 2006 and March 2007. Between the two stages was summer with its vacations, and the researcher was involved in two mission trips. To resume the program after six months and have the same participants with the same enthusiasm and determination represented a significant limitation. Both periods involved evangelistic crusades, with the last one occurring during the latter part of the program. The program made a successful attempt to recoup what was lost through the lack of continuity and focus. It is believed that continuity and consistent focus on the program would have brought better results. Despite those interruptions, however, participants demonstrated that the spiritual elements presented would proceed beyond the closure of the dissertation process and would continue to affect their lives positively for years to come.

2. Church setting: North Miami Beach SDA Church had rented a Methodist facility for more than eighteen years. Given the limitations by the fact that the program would continue in a rented facility, another limitation was the poor and unsuitable

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12 An evangelist came to North Miami Beach Church after his plan for another church failed.
environment for an adequate atmosphere of worship with noise, interruptions, and other factors present most of the time. Also, in November 2006, the Methodist Church closed its facility resulting in the Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church having to move into a tent on its nearby property. That happened in the beginning of the second stage of the spiritual formation program and added additional limitations. It is believed that a better environment would have produced better results. It should be noticed, though, that a significant number of participants attended the weekly meetings faithfully and did their best in overcoming those barriers and applying the spiritual principles that were taught.

3. Church building project: North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church is going through a time of transition. The church has been involved in a building project on new property purchased near the rented church since 2006. From November of that year the church members have been meeting in a tent. It was hoped that in September 2007, they would be able to move to a remodeled building on the property. The time of the spiritual formation program was a time characterized by moving from one place to another and by the resulting complications. It is likely that not having a permanent meeting location for the second part of the program adversely affected this project. It is assumed that having a permanent meeting location, would have made it easier for meetings to take place and for benefits to happen.

4. District factor: North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church is part of a two-church district; therefore, the spiritual formation program was not the author’s only ministry. In fact, a significant amount of his time was allocated to the other church which was organizing as a church and involved in the process of buying a church building.
5. Researcher factor: It should be noticed that despite the fact that the researcher is considerably focused on spirituality both in his personal life and his ministry, this was his first experience in preparing and implementing a spiritual formation program that necessitated more than a Sabbath, a weekend, a week, or even a month. He had to learn some of the elements along with his participants and had to improve some of the aspects of the program. It is assumed that a longer experience in teaching spiritual formation would have been felt directly in the quality of the program as a whole.

**Methodology**

The spiritual formation program proceeded with the following methodology:

1. **Spiritual assessment:** A brief spiritual assessment of the North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church members regarding their exposure to spiritual formation was conducted. This assessment required surveying members one Sabbath morning regarding whether they had ever attended a spiritual formation program, a discussion with church board members, and informal interviews with select long-term members. Information was provided concerning the spiritual formation program and the opportunity to be a participant in the program was offered to each member over the age of eighteen.

2. **Examination of theological considerations:** An examination of Scripture, Ellen G. White’s writings, seeking biblical and theological foundations on spirituality, and practical instructions relating to the formation of spiritual life was done. Special attention was given to Christ’s ministry and His own spiritual life.

3. **Research and evaluation of classical and contemporary literature on spirituality:** A historical overview was conducted of the classical and current literature related to the subject of spirituality.
4. A spiritual formation program was created based on an examination of Scriptures, Ellen G. White’s writings, findings of the literature review, and the survey of members. This program included a set of seminars on spirituality, with the emphasis being on pursuing an authentic relationship with God—on practicing God’s presence through spiritual disciplines.

5. A group of twenty people were recruited to participate in the spiritual formation program and apply the teachings provided during the program.

6. The Christian Spiritual Participation Profile was used to examine participants’ daily spiritual life (habits, methods, spiritual disciplines) and their spiritual needs among the participants in the spiritual formation program. The Christian Spiritual Participation Profile, created by Jane Thayer, was complemented by the addition of another group of twenty-seven questions created by the researcher.

7. A two-stage strategy was developed and implemented within the project’s limitations and focus.

8. Additional Church life and spiritual events: Two evangelistic crusades provided spiritual formation participants with additional opportunities to practice the spiritual discipline of witnessing. During the same time, a seminar on evangelism was presented by Dr. Ricardo Norton, plus a weekend seminar on spiritual formation presented by Dr. Joseph Kidder.

9. An evaluation process of the spiritual formation program was developed. The Christian Spiritual Participation Profile, created to examine the spiritual life of the participants before the program began, was also used to evaluate the daily spiritual life of
participants at the end of the program. This evaluation reports the changes in averages between pre- and post testing.

10. Interviews with participants: Group and individual discussions with the participants were conducted to review their reactions, benefits, observations, and their commitment to continue practicing the new spiritual teachings. These informal discussions also sought to discover what plans participants had to influence other church members to lead them toward the same spiritual formation path that they walked.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR SPIRITUALITY

Introduction

This current chapter deals with the biblical and theological foundations for spirituality. A spiritual formation program must be rooted in the large concept of spirituality before it is designed and implemented. The chapter considers a number of essential scriptural elements including (1) the meaning and nature of spirituality, (2) the concept of God’s presence in spirituality, (3) spirituality and the image of God, (4) the place of holiness and the role of covenant in spirituality, (5) Christ’s spirituality reflected in His ministry, (6) the human quest for spirituality, and (7) Ellen G White’s unique contribution on spirituality.

The role of the Holy Spirit in spirituality and the model of Christ’s spirituality are the central part of this chapter and the heart of the entire project. In fact, all the elements of the current chapter converge in the spiritual formation program. The spiritual formation program developed and implemented was designed as a path to authentic biblical spirituality and learned spiritual disciplines. Each chapter will examine the elements and lay the necessary foundations. Biblical examples are given, along with Ellen G White’s counsel, as well as supportive writers on spirituality and spiritual formation.
Spirituallity, Meaning, and Nature

True spirituality is rooted in Scripture and expressed within biblical boundaries. Thus both the meaning and nature of spirituality are interrelated with the Word of God.

Biblical Terms

Two biblical terms form the roots of spirituality, one from the Old Testament and the other from the New Testament.

Old Testament—Ruach

The word ‘spirituality’ has its root in the word ‘spirit’, which in turn “draws on the Hebrew word ruach”—a Biblical term which includes a range of meanings.1 Ruach occurs 377 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, and its main translation is ‘spirit’ 232 times, and ‘wind’ 90 times.2 It is used “more often of God (136 times)” than of persons, wind, breath, animals, or anything else.3 Another source of the word ‘spirit’ comes from the Latin spiritus, whose main meanings, along with the Hebrew ruach, are ‘breath’ and ‘spirit’.4

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New Testament—*Pneuma*

In the New Testament the word *pneuma* is "the counterpart to the Old Testament *ruach*. While it occasionally means wind (John 3:8), and breath (Matt 27:50; 2 Thess 2:8), it is most generally translated ‘spirit’—an incorporeal, feeling, and intelligent being." "The Latin root of the word ‘spirituality,’ *spiritualitas,* attempts to translate the Greek noun for spirit, *pneuma,* and its adjective *pneumatikos* as they appear in the New Testament Pauline letters." For Paul, rooted in Jewish thinking, ‘spirit’ includes all aspects of life both physical and spiritual, "seen in the perspective of our relationship with God through Jesus Christ." Thus, spirituality-*pneumatikos* is what comes from the spirit—*pneuma,* and the ‘spiritual’ is "what is under the influence of the Spirit of God or is a manifestation of the Spirit."

According to the scriptural usage then, "*rūach* as well as *pneuma* is the Spirit of God—the Holy Spirit—the third Person of the Godhead, whose role, throughout the whole Scripture, is that of the divine agent in all creative acts, whether of the earth, of nature, of the church, of the new life, or of the new man." Thus the meaning of *rūach* and *pneuma*

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5 All biblical references are from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted.

6 Schultz, 745.


8 Burridge, 9.

9 Sheldrake, 23.

goes beyond that of ‘breath’, ‘wind’, or ‘power’. It is a divine Person who animates human beings” (1 Sam 1:15).11

Definitions and Meaning

The task of defining spirituality is extremely important, complex, and fascinating. Important because it has to do with the core of Christian life—therefore the definition must be biblically and theologically sound. Complex, since such a definition has to take into consideration the nature of spirituality with its main components of divine and human, objective and subjective, inward and outward. It also has to do with the mystery of holy, and the fact that it penetrates every aspect of life.12 Finally, it is fascinating because it takes place in the middle of an explosive, increasing interest concerning spirituality. An increasing number of Christians are thirsting for more and deeper life with God, and searching for a more and authentic spiritual life.13 A notable number of contemporary Christian authors provide profound dimensions of spirituality and bring to light, from different perspectives and angles, their insights and discoveries.14

A biblical and meaningful definition of spirituality must not include the misunderstandings of the term in today’s world. These misunderstandings lead one to be a mere good person, with the focus on human power and personal effort. Spirituality is

11“Spirit,” SDABC, 8:1064.


14See the authors quoted in this present paper.
more than that. A definition of the true spirituality has to include words that represent
the source, the means, and the content of spirituality. Furthermore, a proper definition
of spirituality has to take into consideration both the divine and human dimension of
spirituality, the relation between the two, the process of becoming spiritual, and the
evidence of spirituality.

Is there such a definition which includes all these dimensions of spirituality?
David Benner is right when he says “the history of Christian spirituality reveals the fact
that there is no single Christian definition of spirituality.” This chapter will suggest a
working definition with biblical and theological support from a select number of authors.

A Working Definition

Spirituality is a restored relationship with God by faith in Jesus’ atoning sacrifice,
under the work and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in human heart, which is
nurtured and developed within the Word of God, in the context of the real life, and
through the practice of spiritual disciplines.

The central idea of this definition is “relationship with God” (Ps 51:12). The
entire activity of God in the Plan of Salvation is focused on restoring the relationship
between humanity and God, a relationship that was broken by sin. A restored
relationship with God involves: a new covenant between God and humanity (Jer 31:31);

15Maxson, Seeking God’s Heart, 6-7.
the active presence of God in the life of each person (Matt 28:20; John 14:23); the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and His redeeming ministry to confirm humans back into His image (Rom 8:29); the work and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the human heart that brings holiness into life and makes spirituality a present reality (John 14:16-17); the exercise of faith by which human beings seek, receive and share God with others in the experience of salvation (Eph 2:8); and the dynamic process of spiritual growth through practices such as prayer, worship, and studying the Word.

The concept of relationship with God in spirituality is endorsed by a score of Christian authors. One of the authors, James M. Houston, uses the very word relationship to define spirituality. He writes that spirituality is “the state of deep relationship to God.”

One may see in Houston’s definition the source, the essence and the result of true spirituality—that open, permanent and profound connection between humanity and God.

Ben Maxson emphasizes the role of Jesus Christ in that relationship. By defining spirituality as the “realized lordship of Jesus Christ,” Maxson puts the concept of relationship at the heart of his definition. Once Jesus is accepted as Lord in the life of men and women, he says, Jesus becomes “Lord of all.” From that point on spirituality becomes a quality of life which responds to God’s initiative. It then listens for the voice of God through centering oneself in Him, maintaining openness to God and absolute submission to His will.

For Benedict J. Groeschel, spirituality is “the sum total of responses which one

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21 Ibid.
makes to what is perceived as the inner call of God.” Commenting on this, Bailey Gillespie asserts that this sum of responses includes “all of the aspects of spirituality.” For Gillespie this is a call to find God in a ‘balanced way’ or “it is to respond to the four voices of God: God as the One, the True, the Good, and the Beautiful.” Gillespie’s view on spirituality also includes a strong relationship between man and God, a relationship based upon a deep and true knowledge of God’s character.

The concept of relationship is present in the thinking of Henry J. M. Nowen who says that the spiritual life is “reaching out to our inner self, to our fellow human beings and to our God.” In the same line of thought, Stanley Grenz defines spirituality as the “quest for holiness, under the direction of the Holy Spirit.” The point Grenz implies in his definition is relationship. He makes it clear that the believer has to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in order to attain holiness. Further, in Grenz’ thinking, spirituality is not a feeling or only a temporary state; spirituality has to do with holiness and holiness in turn involves a life lived with Christ for the glory of God, and in submission to the Holy Spirit.

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24Ibid.

25Doss, 12.

26Stanley J. Grenz, Revisioning Evangelical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 42.

27Ibid.
Answering the question, What is spirituality? Michal Gemignani is even more specific, pointing in the same direction—relationship with God. “In one sense” he says, “my spirituality is how I relate to God.”¹⁸ To be more precise in helping his readers to define their own spirituality, Gemignani links spirituality to faith, concluding that spirituality is the aspect of faith that helps to guide a person in the way that person conducts his or her life. “It is the framework within which” a person works out his or her desire “to be faithful to God.”²⁹

Iris V. Cully brings a special contribution to the topic, by pointing out that “to live the spiritual life is to be related to God, with this relationship as the basis for all human relationships.”³⁰ More specifically, Cully underlines the significance of that relationship—“living in the presence of God”—as a way of life that really “makes a difference in fulfilling the purpose of God for the world.”³¹

Francis Schaffer goes down to the basics of Christian life where the relationship with Christ begins, and the spiritual nature is formed. Schafer’s thesis is this, “It is impossible even to begin living the Christian life, or to know anything of true spirituality, before one is a Christian. And the only way to become a Christian is by accepting Christ as Savior.”³² Schaffer makes his point clear that “apart from Jesus Christ, human beings


²⁹Ibid.


³¹Ibid.

are cut off from God, alienated and hostile to the Father," that is, they are unspiritual, and consequently, a new spiritual birth is necessary. And though this new birth experience does not equate spirituality as a whole, it is the beginning of it.33

And what is the meaning of spirituality for Schaffer? Schaffer explains that spirituality is “a committed life,” implies an “orientation of love toward God and toward people”, and is a “positive inward experience of reality, followed necessarily by positive outward results.” In other words, spirituality is to love God, to be alive to Him, to have communion with Him, and to love people in this present moment of history.34

Alister McGrath observes spirituality from the perspective of Christianity. “For Christianity,” he says, “spirituality concerns the living out of the encounter with Jesus Christ.”35 Defining Christian spirituality as the way in which the Christian life is understood, McGrath does not see spirituality as a static and limited or singular encounter with Jesus Christ, but as a dynamic process of “experiencing God” or of “practicing the presence of God,” that is maintained and fostered by spiritual disciplines. The encounter with Jesus is the starting point in a relationship which will change everything in the life of the believer.36 The expressions McGrath uses in his definition, “encounter with Christ,” “relationship with Christ,” “devotional practices,” “the experience of God,” “practice the presence of God” are the main components of biblical spirituality. Nothing

33Ibid.
34Ibid.
35McGrath, Christian Spirituality, 2-3.
36Ibid.
can replace these significant expressions or else the whole matter would be reduced to a lifeless theory.

Numerous other authors agree on the relationship concept in spirituality. Among them are M. Robert Mulholland Jr, who views spirituality "as a journey," or a process";37 Dallas Willard, who presents it as a "holistic quality of human life as it was meant to be, at the center of which is our relation to God";38 Philip G. Samaan, who considers it "a total and balanced experience" which involves "the whole person with the Father, the Son, the Spirit, and others";39 Marcos de Benedicto, who sees it as "the way we relate to God, to others, to ourselves, and to environment";40 Jan Johnson, who defines it simply "a God-centered lifetime";41 Kenneth Boa, who recognizes it as "a Christ-centered orientation to every component of life," "a journey of the Spirit," and "a journey with Christ";42 and Brother Lawrence, and Frank Laubach, who call it "practicing the presence of God."43

The conclusion is clear; the suggested definition of spirituality that is foundational for this paper, and will be developed throughout the entire project, is rooted in the

37M. Robert Mulholland Jr, Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 12.


39Philip G. Samaan, Christ's Way to Spiritual Growth (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1995), 47.


Scriptures and is endorsed by a countless number of Christian authors. A restored relationship with God by faith in Jesus, under the work of the Holy Spirit in human heart, and through the practice of spiritual disciplines, is the core of true spirituality.

The Nature of Spirituality

From this working definition, a number of important characteristics of the nature of spirituality emerge. True spirituality is divine in its origin and is centered on God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:14). It is relational—it is realized in relationship with God and involves all other human relationships (Matt 22:37-39). It is personal and experiential—one must be there to taste it in order to become reality for that person (Ps 34:8). It is entirely biblical (2 Tim 3:16-17). It is a practical, dynamic, and transformational process that takes place in the context of the real life (2 Cor 3:18). It is a mystery—it has to do with holiness (Col 2:2-3; 1 Tim 3:16). One must be inspired by the Spirit of God to correctly understand and attain it (John 3:4, 9; 2 Cor 2:12-15). It is realized upon and within God's covenant (Jer 31:31-34; Heb 8:8-12). It is entirely the activity of the Spirit of God in human life (John 3:5-8; 16:7-11). And it necessitates the exercise of faith and human cooperation (Ezek 36:26-28).

Biblical Images

Of great help in understanding the nature of true spirituality are metaphors or

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45 Nicodemus could not understand it.
46 de Benedicto, 19.
images, which are grounded in both the Old and New Testament. The number of images the Bible provides covers the nature of spirituality with all its main characteristics.

According to the purpose of this paper no attempt will be made at this point to explore the biblical images of spirituality; rather, a list of selected images and expressions that carry significant spiritual insights will be presented.

Among the most important images of spirituality the Bible presents are fruitfulness (Isa 5; Matt 7; Luke 6; Gal 5:22); growth (2 Cor 10:15; Col 1:10; 2 Pet 3:18); maturity (1 Cor 2:6; Phil 3:15; Col 4:12); sanctification (Heb 10:29; John 17:17, 19; 1 Thess 5:23); holiness (Lev 19:2; 1 Pet 1:16; Heb 12:14); love (Deut 6:5; Matt 22:37-39; 1 Cor 13). These images portray spirituality through the development of Christian character. Lawrence O. Richards, who explores the above images, observes that (1) each image illustrates an aspect of true spirituality, (2) the source of each aspect of spirituality is God, and (3) though God takes the initiative and is the source of spirituality, human responsibility is involved as well.

The Bible presents other categories of images which emphasize spirituality. Writers as Zacchaeus Abram Mathema, Alister E. McGrath, and Marcos de

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47 McGrath, Christian Spirituality, 82.

48 Richards, Practical Theology of Spirituality, 28-29.

49 Zacchaeus Abram Mathema, “Spiritual Formation: A Program to be Incorporated into the Theological Education Curriculum at Solusi College, Zimbabwe” (D.Min. dissertation, Andrews University, 1991), 17-50. See the images explored by Mathema: the new birth experience (John 3:3-16); the vine and the branches (John 15:1-7); repentance (Mark 1:4; 1:15); the kingdom of God/Heaven (Matt 6:33; Matt 13:44-46); in Christ motif—union with Christ; baptized and clothed with Christ (Rom 6:3, 4a; Gal 3:27); temple (1 Cor 3:16, 17; 6:19); resurrection to new life (Rom 6:4, 5); new creation (2 Cor 5:17); fullness of God and fullness of Christ (Eph 3:14-19).

50 McGrath, 88-109. See the images explored by McGrath: the images of feast (Luke 14:15-24; 15:11-24); journey (Acts 9:2; 24:14); exile (Isa 5:13; Jer 29:1); struggle (Eph 6:10-18; 2 Tim 2:3); the
who explore most of the Bible images, observe that each image that reflects the spiritual life points out to the relationship between humankind and God, and highlights the new realities of this relationship.

Though it is not the purpose of this paper to explore spirituality with the accent on biblical images, a number of them will be touched throughout the paper. God’s image in human being, holiness, restoration, contemplation and presence, imitation and discipleship, journey, new birth experience, new creation, and love, due to their particular importance for the project, will be integrated as principal elements of the spiritual formation program.

**Six Fundamental Aspects of the Nature of Spirituality**

In an article in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, J. M. Houston presents six aspects of the nature of Christian spirituality. Here is a brief description of what Houston perceives about the nature of Christian spirituality. The first aspect relates to the biblical doctrine of creation and the place man has in creation. This eliminates asceticism from any connection with the nature of true spirituality. There is no need for detachment from the life God created. It should be specified that solitude is not asceticism. While asceticism is

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51 de Benedicto, 19. See the images explored by Benedicto, thirst and hunger (Matt 5:6); restoration (Ps 51:22; Jer 15:19); contemplation and presence (Ps 48:9; Exod 33:14); imitation and discipleship (John 13:15; Matt 16:24).

52 Houston, 1047.

53 Ibid.

never considered a biblical option for spirituality, solitude is a spiritual discipline practiced by many children of God, including the Lord Jesus Himself (Matt 4:1-2).

Second, by the revelation of God as a personal God, the Bible leaves no place for human wisdom or reasoning in the realm of spirituality. The world offers a counterfeit spirituality while using some of the elements, skills, and language of the spiritual life. But it is Scripture that is entitled to "define the boundaries for true spirituality."55 That means that the will and the plans of God for human beings are to be found in nothing else but the Holy Scriptures. The knowledge of God is what God decides to reveal through Christ and the Holy Spirit in His Word, and not what people can know from others or from their own wisdom.

Third, Christian spirituality is Christocentric. Spirituality is about Jesus.56 There is no spirituality without Christ. "The center of Christian Spirituality is the Incarnate Word of God."57 Jesus Himself declares that He is "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6). The source of spiritual life is the Cross of Christ. Any spirituality which is not centered in Christ and His sacrifice is false.58

Fourth, Christian spirituality is life in the Trinity. "The essence of Christian spirituality is the experience of God."59 There is a permanent threefold relationship. "The Christian lives in the acceptance of sonship knowing God as Father. He realizes this in

55Maxson, Seeking God's Heart, 6.


57Richards, Practical Theology of Spirituality, 14.

58Maxson, Seeking God's Heart, 7.

59Benner, 74.
the Sonship of Jesus Christ, his saving work of forgiveness, and his gift of eternal life. He actualizes this by the gift of the Holy Spirit who enables the believer to cry ‘Abba Father’ (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). Thus, true spirituality takes place only in relationship to the God of Scripture—the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Comforter.

Fifth, Christian spirituality is about the grace of God in human life. It is the outworking, then, of the grace of God in the human soul, and is marked by growth and maturity in Christ. Nothing can prove better the reality of true spirituality than the transformation of the human being by the divine miracle.

Last, Christian spirituality engenders fellowship and the communion of saints deepens its character. It is obvious that the nature of spirituality has a divine relational dimension as well as a human relational dimension. God did not create human beings to live in isolation, but in fellowship (Gen 2:18). Consequently, the quality of true spirituality is tested by the quality of the relationship one has with God and with his neighbor (Matt 22:37-39).

**Spirituality and God’s Presence**

There is no true spirituality without the presence of God. The realized presence of

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60 Houston, 1047.


62 Ibid., “It implies community and fellowship (Eph. 4. 15-16), a life of prayer (Matt 6. 5-15; 1 Thess 5.17), a sense of the eternal dimension in all one’s existence (Gen. 50;19-20; Roma 8.28), and an intense awareness of life lived in the present before God (Matt. 6.34). The Spirit-filled life is one that manifests practically the Spirit of Jesus, with the fruit of love that is joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled (Gal. 5. 22-23). This is true spirituality. It is a continuous command, “Be filled with the Spirit,” that should be neither quenched (1 Thess 5:19) nor grieved (Eph 4:30).

63 Ibid., 7.
God in human heart makes relationship with God possible and spirituality real. Spiritual life “hinges on the presence of God,” just as physical life hinges on oxygen. God, who created human beings for relationship, knows this truth; therefore He offers Himself for a perfect fellowship with them and by His presence provides the necessary environment in which spirituality can take place. The entire story of the Bible is about the desire of God, the plan of God, and the actions of God “to be with His people.” Consequently, “the central promise in the Bible is ‘I will be with you.’”

The most common Hebrew term for ‘presence’ is panim, which means face or countenance, and implies a “close and personal encounter with the Lord.” The Greek prosopon or enopion, meaning “in the face of,” is also used to indicate presence. According to Bromiley, when the expression is applied to God, there seems to be three main senses. First, there is the general and inescapable presence of God (Ps 139). Second, there is the special presence of God among His people . . . to save or to judge. And third, there is the presence of God in heaven, before which the angels stand (Luke 1.19).

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64 John Ortberg, God Is Closer Than You Think (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 16.
65 Ibid., 13.
66 Ibid., 15.
69 Ibid. “First, there is the general and inescapable presence of God as described in Ps 139:7ff. Second, there is the special presence of God among his people or among the nations to save or to judge (cr. Exod 33:14; Nah 1:5). This is further expressed by the divine dwelling in the tabernacle and temple (cr. Ps 48), and especially by the coming of Jesus Christ as Immanuel (Matt 1:23; John 1:14), his continued presence in and with his disciples by the Holy Spirit (matt. 28:20; John 14; 16-17), and his final coming in glory (1 Thess 2:19). Third, there is the presence of God in heaven, before which the angels stand (Luke 1:19), in face of which there can be no self-righteous boasting (1 Cor 1:29), from which the wicked are to be banished with everlasting destruction (2 Thess 1:9), but before which
Among countless Bible references about the presence of God, there are five major statements that hold together and cover the entire history of humankind—from creation to the “new heaven and new earth.” The first one is recorded in Genesis when God creates man (Gen 1:27). The Creator must be there in order for life to take place in the form molded of lifeless clay.

The second constitutes the central foundation of the Old Covenant; “make a Sanctuary for me and I will dwell among them” (Exod 25:8). This promise emphasizes the longing, the plan, and the decision of God to be with His people throughout the plan of salvation until His relationship with them is completely restored and they are saved. The third is expressed in the prophetic words of Isaiah and in those of Matthew, “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel—which means ‘God with us’” (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23). This is the most striking and vivid fulfillment of God’s desire and plan to live with His children. In the most real sense, through the birth of Jesus, He came to this rebellious planet and actually lived among men.

The fourth statement is expressed in Jesus’ own words, “I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:20), and also in the promise of the Comforter, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth . . . , you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17). Such promises reveal clearly the plan and the will of God to permanently be with man. The fifth statement is found in Revelation, showing what the eternal life will be

believers will be presented faultless in virtue of the work of Christ (Jude 24), thus enjoying, as the psalmist dared to hope, the fullness of joy (Ps 16:11; cf. 73:23-24).”
be like; “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God” (Rev 21:3). Spirituality is where God is. From this point on spirituality will be identified with life itself, it will be an eternal reality, for humanity will live with God forever.

The Presence of God and Creation

In the creation of man God the Father, along with God the Son, and the Holy Spirit were there, present, actively involved in the process (Gen 1:26-27). In the words of Moses, “The LORD God formed (Hebrew, yasar) the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Gen 2:7) is the described process of molding, fashioning, and giving life to the lifeless body of Adam. The active and personal presence of the Godhead in the divine act of creation implies a perfect fellowship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This also proclaims the purpose and the meaning of human existence, and the wonderful truth that humans were not created “to stay empty and alone,” but they were created to be indwelt by the “very Presence that formed [them].” Humanity was formed

71 Ibid., 1:222.
72 Ibid.
for a love relationship\textsuperscript{74}—for fellowship with the Creator and fellowship with each other\textsuperscript{75} (Gen 2:18, 22-24).

This perfect and holy relationship between God and human beings indicates what true spirituality looks like. Adam’s “nature was in harmony with the will of God. His mind was capable of comprehending divine things. His affections were pure; his appetites and passions were under the control of reason. He was holy and happy in bearing the image of God and in perfect obedience to His will.”\textsuperscript{76} No wonder why spirituality is so completely dependant on the presence of God, for “God created us to be ‘with’ us!”\textsuperscript{77}

The Presence of God through Christ and the Holy Spirit in Salvation

God never intended to be separate from humanity. He never intended that human beings live alone.\textsuperscript{78} The desire and the plan of God to be with humankind is seen even after the Fall in the question He asked Adam, “Where are you?” (Gen 3:9). God’s question pictures Him as “the God who seeks the lost.” He is the One who comes as close as possible to the sinful humans who live in His new and hopeless state. Then, in the new circumstances produced by sin God initiates a new kind of relationship with Adam and all people on earth. This description of God who seeks is a “summary of the rest of the

\textsuperscript{74}Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King, \textit{Experiencing God: How to Live the Full Adventure of Knowing and Doing the Will of God} (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 3.

\textsuperscript{75}R. Scott Rodin, \textit{Stewards in the Kingdom: A Theology of Life in All Its Fullness} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 72.


\textsuperscript{77}Rodin, 72.

Throughout the plan of salvation, through Christ and through the Holy Spirit, God the Father would always be present in the life of human beings, working to restore all their broken relationships and to save them from sin.

In the beginning God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were present, and worked together in Creation (Gen 1:2, 26-27). The active presence of the Three Divine Persons is evident also in the plan of salvation when Jesus begins His earthly ministry at His baptism (Matt 3:16-17). “Each member of the Godhead was present at the baptism of Christ.” However, throughout the history of salvation there have been long periods of time when the presence of God the Father has been manifested to human beings through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

**The Presence of God through Christ**

Nothing is more evident in both the Old and the New Testaments as the presence of Christ in the life of men and women throughout the plan of salvation. The central person of the whole Scriptures is Christ Himself (John 5:39; Luke 24:27). Everything God did, He did through Christ, “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:3). Christ who “is before all things,” for whom all things were created (Col 1:16), and through whom “all things hold together” (Col 1:17),

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80 See Jon Dybdahl, class notes for Spiritual and Theological Foundations for Ministry, Andrews University Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, MI, 2001. Dybdahl identifies four relationships that were broken by sin but have been restored by the plan of salvation. They are: human to God relationship (Rev 21:3); human to human relationship (Rev 21:4); human to self relationship (Rev 21:1); and human to nature relationship (Rev 21:1, 22).

is the “image of the invisible God,” the most complete manifestation of God’s presence on earth; He is “Immanuel-God with us” (Matt 1:23).

It was through Christ that God manifested His presence in the Old Testament among the people of Israel. He is the great ‘I Am’, through whom God the Father revealed to Moses (Exod 3:14). Through Him, the promise of God for Israel, “I will be with you,” was fulfilled (Exod 3:12). “The angel of the Lord” (Gen 22:11; Exod 3:2), whose presence meant life and salvation for Israel, “the pillar of light,” and “the pillar of cloud” (Exod 14:19-20), whose presence meant protection and direction, was nobody else but Christ Himself. The presence of Christ was the source of a new life—the source of spiritual life for Israel. As Paul concludes, “They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ” (1 Cor 10:4).

Christ’s presence in the life of humans is indispensable for spiritual life. His own words emphasize the motive of His coming on this planet, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). In fact, Jesus is the spiritual “life” (John 14:6), as well as the “eternal life” (John 17:3). There is no spiritual life apart from Jesus’ presence; “He who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:12). The secret of spirituality is to develop a living relationship with Jesus and to have Him in the heart, “he who has the Son has life.” Therefore He promised, “I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:20), and He fulfilled this promise by sending the Holy Spirit after His ascension.

The Presence of God through the Holy Spirit

"From the beginning, the Spirit of God has been understood as God amidst humanity, God present and active in the world, God in his closeness to us as a dynamic reality shaping human lives and histories. The Spirit, in this sense, is not something other than God, but God in that manner of the divine Being in which he comes closest, dwells with us, acts upon us."

Although the phrase "Holy Spirit" occurs only three times in the Old Testament (Ps 51:11; Isa 63:10; 63:11), the presence of God through the Holy Spirit is evident everywhere. The presence of the Spirit in the history of humankind is not recognized just in the beginning of the world, at the Creation story (Gen 1:2), but also at every step of the plan of salvation, until the final appeal of God recorded in the last words of the Bible (Rev 22:17). God was present in the life of His people throughout the Old Testament time. The relationship between the believer and God, through the presence and the work of the Spirit is evident in the words of Jesus, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth . . . you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you (John 14:16-17). And Paul,

85 See Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 53. "From the beginning, God has been working by His Holy Spirit through human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race. This was manifest in the lives of the patriarchs. To the church in the wilderness also, in the time of Moses, God gave His 'good Spirit to instruct them' (Neh 9:20). And in the days of the apostles He wrought mightily for His church through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The same power that sustained the patriarchs, that gave Caleb and Joshua faith and courage, and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld God's faithful children in every succeeding age."
understanding this divine and direct presence, asks, "Do you not know that your body is a
temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?" (1 Cor
6:19). There is no space or time in history when God has not been present in the life of
humankind through the Holy Spirit. Whenever and wherever He was accepted, then and
there spirituality took place. There is no space or time where humankind can hide from
the Spirit of God (Ps 139:7-8). Spirituality has always been and will always be the action
and the result of the presence of the Holy Spirit in human life. Where the Spirit is present,
there the kingdom of heaven is present.

The Presence of God and the Kingdom of Heaven

The kingdom of heaven is "more than a place or time. It is a relationship with
God, in which He is free to act in and through us." In describing the kingdom of
heaven, Scripture’s emphasis is on the “personal presence and righteous rule of God in
the lives of his people.” The expression “kingdom of heaven” or “kingdom of God” has
a twofold meaning: “the kingdom of grace” and “the kingdom of glory.” The grace
segment of the kingdom of heaven was established at the first advent of Christ by the
Lord Himself. According to Jesus’ own words, before Pilate, He was King (John 18:33-
37); those who put their faith in Him became His subjects, and the territory of the
kingdom was the “hearts and lives of the subjects.”

86 Lawrence O. Richards, The Illustrated Concise Bible Handbook (Nashville, TN: Thomas
Nelson, 2000), 635.

87 Ibid., 470.

88 "Kingdom of God," Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, ed. Francis D. Nichol,

89 Ibid.
Jesus came to rescue His people, to be present in their lives as Savior and spiritual example, and to have a personal relationship with them that transforms their lives after His own pattern (Rom 8:29). The kingdom of heaven is a new spiritual domain that calls for spiritual men (1 Cor 2:15); It is God’s design revealed by Jesus who “focuses on our living in relationship with God and with others.”

As the King of both sides of the kingdom of heaven, Jesus, personally takes over the lives of His children and prepares them “for eternal fellowship.” He points to the kingdom of His divine grace as “preparatory for the kingdom of glory.” As the King came personally the first time to establish His kingdom and to invite in whoever wanted to come (Matt 11:28-29), so He “shall come in his glory,” the second time, “and all the holy angels with Him” (Matt 25:31), and then, “most glorious of all . . . God will dwell with humans, thereby bringing to completion the ultimate divine design for creation.”

Then, not only in a spiritual sense, but also in the physical one, the divine promise would become reality; “The dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God” (Rev 21:3). “In the age to come, God’s presence will be the ultimate blessing, for believers will see him face to face (1 John 3:2).”

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90 Grenz, 159.
91 Boa, 111.
92 Ibid., 318.
93 Grenz, 157.
Perhaps the best biblical illustration of the two aspects of the kingdom of heaven, with God and His subjects together in a spiritual fellowship, is found in Matt 17:1-5. “The future kingdom of glory was represented in miniature—Christ the King, Moses a representative of the risen saints, and Elijah of the translated ones.”95 They both walked with God while on earth, and their relationship with the Lord prepared them to walk with Him and live in His presence in the kingdom of glory.

The kingdom of heaven is the spiritual domain of God’s presence in the lives of those who believe. It is a new reality that calls for a new creation. The purpose of God in establishing the kingdom of heaven is clear: “The final goal of the work of the triune God in salvation history is the establishment of the eschatological community—a redeemed people dwelling in a renewed earth, enjoying reconciliation with their God, fellowship with each other and harmony with all creation.”96 No longer will human beings live without God. God will never leave the subjects of His kingdom alone; Jesus will never “leave them as orphans” (John 14:18); He is with them “always, to the end of the age” (Matt 28:20). The Holy Spirit would never forsake the spiritual children of the kingdom; “for he lives with them and will be in them” (1 John 14:17), making them “a new creation” in the image of God.

Spirituality and the Image of God

“The Bible depicts man primarily from the perspective of his relation to God.”97


96 Grenz, 158.

97 Henry, 548.
Man was created in the image of God. This is connected directly to the purposes of creation; God created man for Himself (Isa 43:21), for His pleasure (Rev 4:11), for His works (Eph 2:10), and for His glory (Isa 43:7). The Hebrew word for ‘image’ is selem, which refers to a “representation, image, or likeness.” The image of God involves a “state of original purity” in which “Adam is depicted as fashioned for rational, moral, and spiritual fellowship with his Maker.”

Created in the Image of God

As Seth was made in the image of Adam (Gen 4:3), so Adam was made in the image of his Creator (Gen 5:1). The meaning of this image is extremely important for the understanding of spirituality. In the act of creation, God demonstrated a desire for relationship. Adam was created to relate to God as a Person, to live in loving communion with Him, and to follow God as his own pattern of life. The rapport of a person to God is like that of a child to his parent. He is made for intimate, reciprocal relationship with God, and designed for relationship with others. Because people are created in the image of God, he can experience intimacy in all his interpersonal relationships. That intimacy is totally spiritual; people are created to live in the


99 Henry, 546.


101 LaRondelle, 6.

atmosphere of God's presence, in peace with God and in peace with one another. It is a holy intimacy which involves knowledge, trust, love, respect, and service.\textsuperscript{103}

Based upon this biblical description, "The theme of humanity as created in the image of God can be seen as underlying the basic task of Christian spirituality."\textsuperscript{104} Human beings were created to experience God's love and to enjoy His presence.\textsuperscript{105} "To honor the triune Lord of all creation," to know, to trust, to love, and to obey God, and to maintain a relationship of love with each other, were the main characteristics of God's image in human beings and the essentials of their spirituality.\textsuperscript{106} Thus, the very creation of humankind in the image of God becomes a major element of their spiritual life. True life is first of all spiritual, and is sustained by an intimate and permanent relationship with a personal God.\textsuperscript{107}

The Loss of the Image of God

The image of God in humanity was lost when Adam and Eve fell into sin (Gen 3:6-13). Sin appeared when Adam and Eve began a new relationship with the enemy of God, Satan, and accepted the deception about the character of God\textsuperscript{108} and His plans for

\textsuperscript{103}Harper, 317.
\textsuperscript{104}McGrath, Christian Spirituality, 42.
\textsuperscript{105}James Emery White, A Search for the Spiritual—Exploring Real Christianity (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 79.
\textsuperscript{106}Boa, 27.
\textsuperscript{107}Harper, 318.
\textsuperscript{108}Dick Winn, If God Won the War, Why Isn’t It Over (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1982), 10.
again "the abiding presence of God." Thus, human beings become again like God—spiritual (1 Cor 2:15).

Ellen White summarizes the miraculous process and the meaning of restoration of God’s image in human beings; “When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven.” This is a divine miracle that is closely related to holiness and takes place within a covenant relationship between God and His children.

Spirituality, Holiness, and Covenant

True spirituality involves holiness, and holiness is the evidence of the restored image of God or “the realized presence of God in human life.” This takes place within the Covenant between God and man.

The Call to be Holy

In the New Testament the Greek hagioi is commonly used for all believers, meaning “holy ones.” Hagiosyne, means holiness, which also belongs to all believers. The main meaning of holiness in the New Testament is an internal reality for all who belong to Christ. Like in the Old Testament, holy speaks of the consecration of being

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118 Ellen White, The Desire of Ages, 173.
120 Williams, 516.
set apart, and calls on created beings to reflect the character and the commitment of God in all that they do.\textsuperscript{121} One of the most important conclusions is that in both the Old and the New Testaments holiness is “rooted in the essential nature of God, and is not an idea or an abstract concept but it is a “relational concept” that “affirms a unique relationship with God.”\textsuperscript{122} “Holiness is the fundamental characteristic of God.” All that is connected to God, in all creation, is holy.\textsuperscript{123}

“The Hebrew word for holy, qados, in its fundamental meaning contains the note of that which is separate or apart.”\textsuperscript{124} The adjective godesh, translated holy, means also ‘cut off’ or ‘separate’.\textsuperscript{125} Thus, in the Old Testament, holiness is associated with God, and involves separation, “some thing, some place or some one who is sacred, consecrated, set apart, or dedicated to God. It also includes obedience to God’s law and standing blameless before Him (1 Thess 5:23).”\textsuperscript{126}

Holiness involves two aspects—“being and doing,” “We are holy,” affirms Maxson, “because of what Christ has done by setting us apart for His divine purpose. He dwells within us (Matt 28:18-20; Eph 3:16-19), and His presence makes us holy . . . ‘Holy doing,’ on the other hand, is simply living out in our lives the reality of being holy

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{121}Lawrence O. Richards, \textit{The Illustrated Concise Bible Handbook} (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 778.
\item \textsuperscript{122}Ibid., 101.
\item \textsuperscript{123}Williams, 515.
\item \textsuperscript{124}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{125}Leech, 38.
\item \textsuperscript{126}Maxson, \textit{Living Holiness}, 9.
\end{itemize}
in Christ... The most important point we must remember is its source. God, and only God, can produce a holy life.”

The Call to be holy is from God and is extended throughout the Bible to all people and in all times. Though sin has marred the image of God in His sons and daughters, intimacy with God—a life of holiness—a life of living in God’s presence is still possible. God never gave up on His ideal for His children. “God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach.” It is to be “renewed in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness.” “Be perfect, therefore,” asks Jesus, “as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt 5:48).

God intended Israel to be holy. His reasons are clearly conveyed through Moses; “Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the LORD your God” (Lev 20:8); “I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy” (Lev 11:45). The motivation for holiness is planted in the human heart at the moment of spiritual birth by the Holy Spirit, and is based on the relationship God intended to have with His people. The words, “I am the Lord your God,” “you are my people,” “be holy that I am holy” are repeated over and over again throughout the Scriptures. This shows clearly that God wants to maintain a relationship

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127 Ibid.

128 Maxson, Spiritual Leadership, 13.


130 John Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (Kansas City, MS: Beacon Hill Press, 1966), 41.

with His people and to make them like Him. That "relationship with God makes holiness necessary." 132

In the New Testament, God presents the same standard for His children. He calls people to be holy (1 Cor 1:2); He makes known that "His will is even your sanctification" (1 Thess 4:3; 5:23). He based the call to holiness on His relationship with people through the salvation He provided in Jesus, and on His "own purpose and grace" (2 Tim 1:8-9).

Notice important declarations God makes regarding holiness. First, "I am the LORD, who makes you holy" (Lev 22:32). Second, "I have set you apart from the nations to be my own" (Lev 20:6). Third, "you are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy" (Lev 20:6). Fourth, "And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood" (Heb 13:12). Fifth, "The key to experience holiness is the Holy Spirit whom God has sent into believers. . . . It is the Spirit’s presence that makes men ‘saints’, ‘holy ones.’" 133 Sixth, holiness is to be manifested in all relationships and in all aspects of life; "be holy in all you do" (1 Pet 1:15). Seventh, "without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). Eighth, "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy" (Heb 12:14).

Spirituality and the Law of God

In looking at spirituality, the most visible evidence of spirituality is "perfect obedience to the Law of God, perfect righteousness." 134 The Law 135 of God is a

132 Richards, Practical Theology of Spirituality, 100.
133 Ibid.
135 The Law mentioned in this section is the Ten Commandments.
Spirituality and the Sabbath

What is the purpose of the Sabbath in spirituality? How does the Sabbath help the spiritual person have a relationship with God? Spirituality is directly connected to the observance of Sabbath, the fourth of the Ten Commandments. Five observations are considered important to be made when it comes to spirituality and Sabbath.

First, the Sabbath is a memorial of creation that reminds one that he or she is a creature and the life depends totally upon a connection with the Creator (Exod 20:8-11). Second, the Sabbath is a means to holiness (Ezek 20:12). Spirituality is enhanced by the observance of the Sabbath. Third, the observance of the Sabbath is a sign of spirituality and loyalty (Isa 56:2; Ezek 20:20). The obedience to the seventh-day Sabbath gives evidence of loyalty to the Creator. Fourth, God’s Sabbath rest is “the connecting link of God’s covenant of creation with His covenant of redemption (Gen 2).” And fifth, the Sabbath is the day of fellowship with God.

If the greatest joy of spiritual person is to meditate on the Law of God and obey it, then the Sabbath is the heart of this experience. The object of meditation is not only God’s mighty acts or God’s holy words but a Person, the very Creator who created both the man and the Sabbath for man (Mark 2:27). More than that, the Sabbath experience does not provide only the object of meditation but also the most amazing privilege of meeting the Creator. Such fellowship with God results naturally in spiritual growth and holiness.

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142 LaRondelle, 11.

Thus, the Sabbath represents God's appointed time, the holy spiritual frame, and the most perfect environment for the process of holiness to take place. Hans LaRondelle summarizes well when he says that "it was never God's creative purpose that humanity be alone. Therefore He provided for humanity a special 'spiritual temple in time,' the seventh-day Sabbath rest of God, as the sacred time for communal worship of God."\textsuperscript{144} When this communion between human beings and God takes place, the Sabbath adds the dimension of holiness to the existence of humankind.\textsuperscript{145} Holiness involves the observance of the Sabbath (Ezek 20:12)—a day of delightful communion with God, a symbol of redemption and a sign of sanctification.\textsuperscript{146}

There is a major problem here. Humans in their sinful nature cannot perfectly obey God's Law. They cannot keep the Sabbath holy and have no power in themselves to obey (Rom 7:18, 23). To make obedience possible a new power had to be given to people so that they would be made able to perfectly and gladly obey all the commandments of God, including the Sabbath.

Spirituality and the New Covenant

Covenant is the primary way in which the Bible portrays the relationship between God and human beings.\textsuperscript{147} The covenant of God with His people is important because only within God's covenant relationship can His people become spiritual again.

\textsuperscript{144}LaRondelle, 12.

\textsuperscript{145}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{146}Ministerial Association, \textit{Seventh-day Adventists Believe}, 281.

\textsuperscript{147}Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman III, 177.
The Hebrew word for covenant is beriyth.\textsuperscript{148} Covenant in the Bible is God’s initiative and way in dealing with humankind. God cannot be satisfied with a broken relationship, nor can He be satisfied with a general and superficial one. At the heart of God’s covenant is His longing and plan for a deep and personal relationship with His people. To restore them to their original image and to transform them into spiritual persons is the core of God’s covenant.

The concept of the covenant implies faithfulness from both parties, from God and human beings. God’s “faithfulness” in the covenant implies “His commitment to redeem and restore humankind” to Himself.\textsuperscript{149} Human being’s faithfulness, on the other hand, implies faith, love, and obedience to God. The amazing benefit and provision of the New Covenant is that God is the one who performs in people all the elements of spirituality which involve faith, love, and obedience to Him. As the Bible says, “It is God who works in you to will and to do according to his good purpose” (Phil 2:13). “Through the covenant, the ideas of closeness and intimacy are amplified.”\textsuperscript{150} Scripture knows nothing of authentic spirituality apart from covenant. The Bible itself is “the Book of the Covenant,” called Old Covenant and New Covenant.\textsuperscript{151} There are six covenants mentioned in the Bible.\textsuperscript{152} From the New Testament perspective, all divine covenants are

\textsuperscript{148}Ronald F. Youngblood, “Covenant,” \textit{Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary} (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 1995), 306. “Beryth means alliance, pledge, “agreement between two people, or two groups of people that involves promises on the part of each to the other.” “Covenant, in the biblical sense, implies much more than a contract or simple agreement . . . , a covenant is a permanent arrangement.”

\textsuperscript{149}LaRondelle, 3-4.

\textsuperscript{150}Harper, 318.

\textsuperscript{151}Youngblood, 306.

\textsuperscript{152}The first covenant mentioned in the Bible is between God and Adam in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:15-17). Next is the covenant of grace, in which God makes the promise to “save sinful humanity
"stages of the covenant of grace in which God progressively unfolds the promise made in Gen 3:15;"\(^\text{153}\) "a development of God’s eternal covenant of redemption as established by Christ Jesus."\(^\text{154}\) The unity of the covenants is seen in the same purpose that is mentioned in all of them: “I will be your God and you shall be My people” (Gen 17:7-8; Ezek 36:28). Thus, it is clearly proved that the divine covenants are planned to fully restore fallen human beings and bring them back into intimate personal relationship with God.\(^\text{155}\)

This purpose of God finds its complete fulfillment within the New Covenant that is the ultimate expression of God’s faithfulness and determination to carry out His original plan for humanity.\(^\text{156}\) In the New Covenant a new relationship with God is open for men and women through Jesus (John 14:6). In Jesus, the Lord forgives people “their wickedness and . . . remembers their sins no more” (Jer 31:34); He “cleanse[s]” them . . . “from all” . . . their “impurities and from “all idols” (Ezek 36:25); He “remove[s]” from people’s lives their “heart of stone,” and gives them “a new heart” “of flesh,” and also puts “a new spirit” in them (Ezek 36:26). Then God puts His “law in their minds and write it on their hearts” (Ezek 36:26). And the miracle does not stop here, for God also

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\(^\text{154}\) LaRondelle, 53.

\(^\text{155}\) Cowan, 358.

puts “His Spirit” in them, and moves them “to follow” His “decrees and be careful to keep His laws (Ezek 36:27).

This is spirituality in the most complete form; humankind is “confirmed to the likeness of his Son” (Rom 8:29); they are “made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ” (Heb 10:10); they are a “new creation” (2 Cor 15:17); they are “justified” before God, and “have peace with God” (Rom 5:1). Thus, within the New Covenant, through the Holy Spirit, God restores the broken relationship, and brings into people’s lives a new spirituality with its essential components of faith, love, and perfect obedience to the will of God. According to God’s plan, at the second coming of Christ, God’s New Covenant promise will be fully and finally realized.157 “They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God” (Rev 21:3). Then it will be seen that the New Covenant is the “everlasting covenant” (Jer 32:40; 50:5) that involves the certainty that the new relationship between God and humanity will never end.

Spirituality and Christ’s Ministry

Based upon the Gospel record, Christ’s ministry provides the only perfect illustration of spirituality.158 The main purpose of Jesus’ ministry is to reveal the perfect character of the Father to the world (John 17:6) and to redeem the fallen human beings from sin and death (John 3:17), bringing them back into intimacy with the Father and with Himself (John 17:23).

Thus “the concern over spirituality comes out of an understanding of the life and

157Ibid., 358.

ministry of Jesus”¹⁵⁹ and the impact He had on his first followers.¹⁶⁰ To fulfill His unique ministry, Jesus had to fully experience true spirituality. And He did really experience true spirituality through one means: “He was in constant relationship and union with His Father.” This was His life—His ministry; the “basis of His dynamic spiritual life, and the source for all His relationships with others.”¹⁶¹

Seven Areas of Christ’s Spirituality

From Christ’s life and ministry seven main areas of spirituality emerge and are important in understanding true spirituality. Though each area is important; love, devotion to God, and empowerment by the Spirit, are considered foundational for all the others.

Love to God and to All People

Though the authors quoted in this paper do not regard love as a separate area of Christ’s spirituality, the Bible presents love as a main dimension of Christ’s spirituality. Spirituality was never intended to be experienced in isolation from others. Most of the space and time for spirituality is in the context of real life, in the middle of human relationships.

Love was the principle that motivated all Christ’s actions. Jesus is therefore the exemplification of the principle of love. The love Jesus manifested was the kind of love


¹⁶¹Samaan, Christ’s Way to Spiritual Growth 61.
that the world had never witnessed before (John 13:34)—infinite love; “self-sacrificing love.”\textsuperscript{162} It was such love that made Him leave the “glory of heaven and the homage of the angels,” and “chose to give back the scepter into the Father’s hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe” to die for “the perishing.”\textsuperscript{163}

The story of the wonderful Father, His kingdom, and His love was the ever present theme of His preaching and teaching. His love for the Father compelled Him to reveal the true character of the Father (John 14:9) and glorify Him (John 17:4). Out of that love Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing” (John 5:19). Jesus exalted the Father saying, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

The love between the Father and the Son is reciprocal. Jesus could say with all certainty and joy, “The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands, and “shows him all he does” (John 3:35; 5:20). And when the time for His greatest sacrifice came, He could also gladly say, “The world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me” (John 14:31). The love Jesus had for His Father was a love demonstrated by perfect surrender and obedience to His will and His commandments (John 15:10).

Of countless Bible references about Christ’s attitude to humanity, one passage in particular summarizes His endless love for those He came to save. “It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to

\textsuperscript{162}Ellen White, \textit{Desire of Ages}, 20.

\textsuperscript{163}Ibid., 22.
the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love” (John 13:1).

The Cross—The Full Extent of Christ’s Love

“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). And, on the Cross, Jesus did it not only for His friends but also for all those who hated Him (Luke 23:34). “The Cross was central to Jesus’ mission.”164 The cross “lies at the heart”165 of all Jesus did for God and for humankind. Through the Cross His supreme sacrificing love was fully revealed. Based on this fact Jesus said, “The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life” (John 5:17).

The love relationship between the Son and the Father finds its supreme manifestation and fruit at the Cross, for there “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor 5:19). This way, the Cross becomes the most powerful symbol and evidence of Christ’s victorious love, and a new model of a love relationship between God and His new creation. Thus, Christ’s love was grounded in His personal devotion to the Father. Love motivated His coming to proclaim the Good News to the world and was the source of His compassion to all people. It was the content of His holiness, and the motivation for all His works. His perfect spirituality and life can be summarized by one word: love. Yes, for “Christ is love.”166

164 Hull, 52.


166 Ellen G. White, 1888 Materials, Miscellaneous Collections, Cap. 18, to brethren assembled at the General Conference, 171
Personal Devotion to God

What set Jesus’ humanity apart from any other human being was the very intimate and ongoing relationship He had with the Father. This was the central focus of Jesus’ life, and everything else, His entire mission, His ministry was a result of that exclusive relationship. It is said about Him that “no one has ever lived with a sense of the presence of God as Jesus did.” “Throughout His life on earth He had walked in the light of God’s presence. When in conflict with men who were inspired by the very spirit of Satan, He could say, ‘He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone’” (John 8:29). So intimate was Jesus’ relationship with the Father, and so dependent was He upon the Father’s presence, that when the iniquity of entire world was laid upon Him (Isa 53:5), and He “seemed to be shut out from the light of God’s sustaining presence,” He could not bare this thought and exclaimed, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” This terrible sense of separation from the Father culminated on the Cross when in desperation Jesus “cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’—which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” (Matt 27:46).

Of all Jesus’ devotional practices, prayer, study of the Word, and worship were central in His life. Jesus was a person of prayer. Prayer was the essence of His relationship with the Father. “His humanity made prayer a necessity and a privilege. He

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169 Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, 685.

170 Ibid., 685.

171 Smith and Graybeal, 33.
found comfort and joy in communion with the Father” more than in anything else.  

“The busier He got, the more He talked with God.”

The Gospel is clear on this; “Very early in the morning,” Jesus “went off to a solitary place, where he prayed” (Mark 1:35). And, after toiling all day, preaching to the ignorant, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, raising the dead, feeding the multitudes, evening after evening He went away from the confusion of the city,”

“after leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray” (Mark 6:46). It did not matter in what kind of circumstance He was, or how busy He was, Jesus used all situations as opportunities for prayer.

For a deeper and more intimate communion with the Father, fasting (Matt 4:1-2) and solitude (Mark 1:35), with study of the Scriptures, and moments of meditation and silence formed the environment Jesus sought as often as possible. “His hours of happiness were found when alone with nature and with God.”

The study of Scriptures, meditation upon the Word and its application on His own life and ministry represented the ground and boundaries for His spirituality—His devotional life. Every thought of the heart, every word He spoke, and every act in life were rooted in scriptures.

Worship is an expression that characterizes Jesus’ devotional life most completely. In “not considering equality with God something to be grasped,” and

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173Smith and Graybeal, 33.


175Ellen White, Desire of Ages, 89.
becoming “obedience to death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:6, 8), Jesus made out of each act in His life an act of worship. Even prayer was a part of His worship to God. The words addressed to Satan, “Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only” (Matt 4:9:10), represent not only an answer to the tempter, but His mission statement for His entire life of ministry.

The other spiritual practices that are part of Jesus’ devotional life are closely connected to prayer, studying scriptures, and worship. They can be seen as a natural result of the first three. Meditation, solitude, silence, and fasting were already mentioned. In silence, Jesus “did not open His mouth . . . like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers” (Isa 53:7). Witnessing was more than a spiritual practice for Jesus; it was His very mission, for He came to proclaim “the good news of God” (Mark 1:14).

Watchfulness was an indispensable part of Jesus’ prayer life. He prayed and watched, or He watched by praying. “Stay here and keep watch with me,” meant, “pray with me” (Matt 26:38-40. In journaling, Jesus did not need to write a daily journal, for His entire life was a fulfillment of the journal already written for Him by the Father before He came into the world (Ps 40:7-8). However, the gospel is a divine report of His earthly ministry, a journal of His life with God. Guidance was obtained by prayer, by searching the Scriptures, and by the presence of the Holy Spirit in His life. His prayer in Gethsemane, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Matt 26:38), is the prayer of total submission to God’s guidance.

Simplicity, in Jesus’ case, was a trait of His character. He could say, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head” (Matt 8:20). For “though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you
through his poverty might become rich (2 Cor 8:9). Submission (Phil 2:8), service (Isa 52:13), and stewardship (John 17:4), along with chastity, secrecy, and frugality are all components of the spirit of sacrifice that characterized Jesus’ entire ministry. Sacrifice was present in each moment of Jesus life with the Cross the sum and the crown of all.

Confession, Jesus did not need to confess sins or mistakes because His life was sinless. He was perfect. But as a representative of those He came to save, He took upon Him the responsibility and ministry of confessing their sins and interceding for them (Luke 23:34).

Compassion Toward All People

The compassion Jesus had was not just a simple feeling, but a principle of love. Out of compassion, Jesus “healed the sick” (Matt 14:14); He provided food for thousands who “ate and were satisfied” (Matt 15:37); He “touched” the “eyes” of two blind men who “immediately received their sight and followed him” (Matt 20:34). “Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man” with leprosy and healed him (Mark 1:41).

As Christ cared for the sick and the needy, He also conveyed His teachings on the importance of caring for “our neighbors” (Matt 5:42:48; 6:1-4). In manifesting His compassion to a poor, sick and hopeless humanity, Jesus revealed a spirituality that was

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176 Boa, 84.

177 Ibid.


179 Smith and Graybeal, 33.
nothing else but a proclamation of God’s perfect character—“The LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, who is slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness” (Exod 34:6). His compassionate spirituality was a revelation of God’s own glory and grace—a divine way of reaching the lost with the Good News.

Proclamation of the Good News to the Lost

Christ’s spirituality takes the audible and visible form in reaching out to the lost with the Good News about God’s character and love to the world. To bring sinful humanity back into a new relationship with God, in the kingdom of His great love, was the heart of Christ’s message and ministry. “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10), Jesus said.

According to Ellen White, Christ’s method in reaching the lost was relational; “The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’” Christ’s proclamation of Good News was first of all about God who “did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (John 3:17). The Good News was also the proclamation of the fact that the King had already come, and He had already started His marvelous ministry among them.

Christ’s plan in proclaiming the Good News involved powerful spiritual elements. He presented the truth about God’s character through the living Word, through His own living example of spirituality, and through His acts of compassionate love. He also

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180Smith and Graybeal, 27.
181Foster, Streams of Living Water, 15.
revealed Himself as the King of the kingdom of God, and as the example of what the subjects of the kingdom should be. Further, He started His ministry of restoring their lives, and most importantly their relationship with God. In order for the restoration to take place, He invited them to a personal relationship with Him, and asked them to repent and believe. Finally, He made them disciples empowering them to copy His own spirituality.

The Making of Spiritual Disciples

The ultimate purpose of Jesus’ ministry in proclaiming the Good News to the lost was to make disciples—spiritual men and women who are like Him in character and are engaged in the same spiritual ministry for others (2 Cor 5:19-20). When Jesus calls one to follow Him, He seeks to develop a special relationship with that person. In His invitation, “Come, follow Me,” Jesus means, follow My example of spirituality, follow My model, follow My relationship with the Father, “and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt 4:19).

A score of other direct or implied invitations Jesus makes, convey this purpose of a transforming relationship. All Christ’s invitations to the lost are invitations to participate in the same kind of relationship He has with the Father. Jesus comes to the lost with a heart full of God’s love. He restores the broken relationships and makes disciples of those who accept His invitation to a personal relationship with Him. Then,

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183Miroslav M. Kis, Follow Me (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2001), 14.

184They are: “Come to me” (Matt 7:28; 11:28); “Listen to me” (Matt 17:5); “Get to know me” (John 17:3); “Trust in me”—“Have faith in me” (John 14:1); “Accept me in your life—opens the door for
He promises His presence to His disciples, and sends them to represent Him to others who are lost in the world, and to bring them to the same relationship with God. “Go,” says Christ to the twelve, “and make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19); and “as you go, preach this message: “The kingdom of heaven is near; heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give” (Matt 10:7-8).

Thus, in the life of His disciples, Christ’s spirituality was perfectly reproduced. They experienced the same devotion to God, were led by the same Spirit, undertook the same ministry, proclaimed the same message, used the same spiritual means, and obtained the same spiritual results.

Holiness—Virtue in Thought, Word, and Action

Holiness represents Christ’s inner area of spirituality, and is closely associated with His devotional life. Virtue in thought, word, and action is what best describes His perfect character. Christ’s holiness is first reflected in His relationship with the Holy Spirit. The baby Jesus, conceived in the virgin Mary was “from the Holy Spirit” (Matt 1:20). Due to this divine presence in His life as the Son of Man, He is called “the Holy One” . . . ”the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). Jesus was aware of His divine origin and of the Holy Spirit’s presence in His life when He said, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me” (Luke 4:18), therefore His life was in the Spirit; His thoughts, His words, His deeds, His everything.

me” (Rev 3:20); “Love God”—“Love me” (Matt 22:37; John 14:15); “Learn of me (Matt 11:29); “Live with me” (John 14:23); “Remain in me” (John 15:4); and “Live for me” (2 Cor 5:15-16; Matt 25:40; 25:45).

185Gillespie, 217.
Second, holiness of character is expressed in Christ’s unique relationship with God. The Son of Man depended on God’s presence every moment in His life, therefore He said, “For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me” (John 6:38). And the will of the Father regarding Christ’s character was the same will as for any other son of man, “Be holy in all you do . . . because I am holy” (1 Pet 1:15). Jesus spoke God’s words, “These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me” (John 14:24). He also meant His deeds, “It is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work” (John 14:10), for “the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does” (John 5:19).

Third, Christ’s holiness is seen in the context of the battle with Satan and his terrible temptations. In the wilderness (Matt 4:1-11), and at every step in His life, inclusively on the Cross, Jesus was fully victorious in His battle with Satan. The conclusion of the Bible is evident. Though He was “tempted in every way, just as we are”–yet He “was without sin” (Heb 4:15). Often that could be accomplished only through suffering (Heb 2:18), and finally only through His death on the Cross. He could clearly state, “The prince of this world is coming, he has no hold on me (John 14:30). The presence of the Father and of the Holy Spirit in Christ’s life left no room for the evil one.

Fourth, Christ’s holiness is demonstrated in the context of His ministry for the lost. In order to “take away the sin of the world,” He had to be and He was “The Lamb of God” (John 1:29), “without blemish or defect” (1 Pet 1:19). His heart with its desires, plans, and motives was pure, for the Law of God was “written within His heart” (Ps
40:8). He said it again, “I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me” (John 8:28).

Empowerment by the Spirit

Christ’s ministry could not take place apart from the Holy Spirit. “All Christ’s ministry is God’s ministry empowered by the Spirit of God.” Of many texts found in Scriptures explicitly referring to the Spirit as present in the life and ministry of Jesus, a limited number will be selected in order to cover this section.

The first, mentioned in Luke 2:40, reveals that Jesus was born by the Spirit, and that the Spirit “indwelt Him from birth.” This simply means that “it was under the Spirit’s guidance that Jesus grew and developed as a child,” “and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him” (Luke 2:52).

The second is a declaration made by John and which covers Jesus’ entire life and ministry, “For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit” (John 3:34). These words describe Jesus as being the person who experienced the fullness of the Holy Spirit in His life and ministry. That was most obvious at His baptism when “heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him” (Matt 3:16).

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187 Jan Paulsen, When the Spirit Descends (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2001), 37.


189 Ibid.

190 Ministerial Association, Seventh-day Adventists Believe, 73.
The third reference is immediately after His baptism when Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness (Matt 4:1). The Bible says that Jesus went up from the Jordan “full of the Holy Spirit” (Luke 4:1). Jesus needed the Spirit in His battle with the evil one in order to be enabled to meet every trial and temptation successfully. “In His own strength, as a mere man, He could never have been victorious”191 against Satan and his angels; but in the Spirit “Jesus conquered the devil,” and in all His ministry, Jesus would continue “to conquer Satan and his demons.”192

The fourth shows that the Spirit was also present in Christ’s relationship with all people and His ministry for humankind. “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19). Christ met the deepest needs of humanity because the Holy Spirit was upon Him and provided anything that was necessary to meet their temporary as well as their eternal needs.

The fifth, recorded in John, reveals Jesus as the One who can impart the Spirit to others. “And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:22). There was nothing more important for Christ’s disciples than the Spirit they received from their Master.

Thus, Christ’s ministry and spirituality were empowered by the Spirit of God. It is important to notice that everything Christ said or did, in all His relationships, and in all circumstances of His earthy life, He did under the influence of the Spirit. Nothing was

191Wallenkampf, 32.
192Paulsen, 36.
done without the participation and the help of the Spirit of God. “The Spirit directed and
drove Him to please His Father in the salvation of lost humanity.”

The source of His life of virtue in thought, word, and deeds was in the Spirit and
in the Word of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). And finally, when the time for his departure came,
Christ left to His disciples what was the best He had; a promise that would bring in their
lives the same spirituality that characterized His perfect life—the promise of the Spirit.

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

In His plan and desire to never “leave them as orphans” (John 14:18), but to be
with His disciples “always, to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:20), Christ promised to
the disciples that He would return to them (John 14:18). But it was through the Spirit that
Jesus would come to be with the disciples. In the same discussion and just before the
Cross and His ascension to heaven, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth: It is for your good
that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I
will send him to you” (John 16:7). Through the Spirit Jesus planned to be with them,
even more—to be in them “forever” (John 14:17).

To be spiritual like their Master and to continue Christ’s ministry on earth, the
disciples needed the same Spirit as Jesus had. Christ’s spirituality could be reflected in
the life of His disciples only under the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in their
lives. “In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to
inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart.”

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194 For more see Ellen White, The Desire of Ages, 671. “He rejoiced because of the abundant help
He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His

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Harmony between Faith and Work in the Life of Jesus

"Incarnational—sacramental life" as Foster calls it, is about the area of spirituality in Christ’s life before He began His public ministry. Though very little is revealed in the Bible about His childhood and His years before His baptism, yet there are three recorded passages that are helpful in understanding the subject. Luke makes three statements that give some important hints into what kind of person Jesus was as a Son of Man, and what kind of spirituality He developed in the midst of His family and among His neighbors.

The first description Luke makes about Jesus is that “the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40). The wisdom Jesus had was from God, “for the LORD gives wisdom” (Prov 2:6). The second description is almost similar to the first one; “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52). The third description is in Luke 2:46-51, where Jesus was at the temple when He was twelve years old. From this passage the following insights are revealed:

Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.”

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195 Smith and Graybeal, 27.

196 Foster, Streams of Living Water, 18.

197 See other references: Jesus was blessed with that wisdom (Prov 3:13), for the wisdom He had was from the same wisdom by which “the LORD laid the earth’s foundations . . . and “set the heavens in place” (Prov 3:19); it was the wisdom that “is supreme” in life (Prov 4:7); “more profitable than silver” and “gold” (Prov 3:14); that “cost all you have” (Prov 4:7), and prolongs life with many years (Prov 4:10); It is the wisdom whose main elements are “fear of the LORD...” and knowledge of the Holy One”; that brings joy to the parents (Prov 29:3); and “wins souls” (Prov 11:30); it is the wisdom that “saves you from the ways of wicked men” (Prov 2:10), and protects from evil (Prov 2:12). Finally, it is the wisdom that fears God “and keep his commandments” (Eccl 12:13).
First, it is important to observe that Christ’s relationship with God was more important to Him than any other relationships. When the ceremonial feast was over, Jesus still remained at the temple. His reason, “I had to be in my Father’s house” (2:49).

Second, He was respectful in the relationship with the teachers of Israel, “listening to them and asking them questions” (Luke 2:46). Luke concludes, “Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers” (2:47). Third, though He seemed as failing His parent’s expectations, He was respectful to them, explaining that His relationship with God supersedes His relationship with them.

Fourth, His relationship with God and His faith were in harmony with His responsibilities in life as a Son of Man. The Bible says that “then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them” (Luke 2:51). “The grace of God” that “was upon him,” along with the wisdom that He received from God, and the faith expressed in His religious life, did not make Jesus neglect His earthly duties or “ignore His relation to His earthly parents.”¹⁹⁸ On the contrary, His faith made Jesus “obedient to them.” “From Jerusalem He returned home with them, and aided them in their life of toil.”¹⁹⁹ Note this perceptive comment regarding Christ’s spirituality:

Jesus is our example. There are many who dwell with interest upon the period of His public ministry, while they pass unnoticed the teaching of His early years. But it is in His home life that He is the pattern for all children and youth. The Saviour condescended to poverty, that He might teach how closely we in a humble lot may walk with God. He lived to please, honor, and glorify His Father in the common things of life. His work began in consecrating the lowly trade of the craftsmen who toil for their daily bread. He was doing God’s service just as much when laboring at the carpenter’s bench as when working miracles for the multitude.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸Ellen White, The Desire of Ages, 82.
¹⁹⁹Ibid., 82.
²⁰⁰Ibid., 74.
Thus, Christ’s spirituality in the midst of family and normal life, with all the inerrant responsibilities of a human being, is as real and as biblical as that expressed on the sermon on the mount, or when in the temple, after His baptism. It is believed that He was “the Man”; the most perfect human being that has ever lived, and the most perfect son, any spiritual parents might have ever longed to have. None of His contemporaries is mentioned that had ever made any negative comment concerning His character, except that He seemed more than a carpenter, more than a son of man.

**The Human Quest for Spirituality**

Deep in every human heart there is a need for God, planted by the Creator—a need that cannot be satisfied by any other means except by the Lord Himself. Throughout Scripture men and women expressed their longing after God in words that cannot be misunderstood. David says, “Your face, LORD, I will seek” (Ps 27:8). Korah prays, “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” (Ps 42:1). Asaph makes a declaration that is extremely profound, “Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you” (Ps 73:26). His conclusion is clear, “But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge” (Ps 73:28). Isaiah longs, “My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you” (Isa 26:9). Moses pleads that God never leave them alone. Elijah wanted rather to die,

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than to live without God's presence (1 Kgs 19:4).

The longing and the quest of all these people, along with countless others, was for the presence of God and for that unique rest and joy that are found only in a personal relationship with Him. It did not matter how much they experienced God previously, they always longed for more. This quest is a gradual process that makes the relationship with God grow beyond human imagination. Even after the Lord showed Moses His glory (Exod 34:5-7), Moses still did not stop there. He added, "Let the Lord go with us" (Exod 34:8).

The biblical quest for spiritual vitality follows the same pattern. First, there was a thirst, a deep longing for God in their hearts. Second, there is a desire for a relationship with God for the cultivation of His presence. Third, there is an encounter with God, a knowledge of Him personally, and an experienced with Him. Fourth, there is an insatiable thrust for more of God.

Last, all were guided and empowered by the Spirit of God in their quest for spirituality.

The Spiritual Person

Four words could rightly describe the spiritual person, and these words are Spirit, holiness, faith, and faithfulness. The first two have already been explored previously. However, a few more points deserve to be stressed here. The spiritual person is, first of all, a Spirit-filled person. The Spirit is the divine agent that produces and coordinates the whole process of spirituality. Nothing happens in spirituality apart from the presence and participation of the Spirit. But there is a special work of the Spirit in His role of making humankind spiritual and that work covers everything that has been said. "The primary
role of the Spirit” in dealing with human beings, “is to bring the presence of Jesus Christ” into his or her life in order to create “the ultimate intimacy with God.”203 The presence of Christ means the Spirit of Christ, the character of Christ; His image, His holiness, His faith, His faithfulness. “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27), is what true spirituality is all about, and this is the ultimate fruit of the Spirit.

Holiness, whose unique source is the Holy Spirit as well, is the heart of spiritual humans. Holiness in the life of spiritual men and women means more than a state. It means even more than “being consecrated” or dedicated to God” when dealing with religious activities. It means “a dynamic concept,” a process of ongoing sanctification that permeates and covers the entire life—thoughts, words, and actions—“spirit, soul, and body” (1 Thess 5:23). It means what Ellen White rightly says, “Holiness is not rapture: it is an entire surrender of the will to God; it is living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father; it is trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is relying on God with unquestioning confidence, and resting in His love.”204 It requires a continuous “submission” of the spiritual man and woman “to the discipline and restraining influences of the Spirit of truth.”205 “God labors” day by day “for man’s sanctification, and man is to co-operate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits.”206

203 Maxson, Seeking God’s Heart, 14.


205 Ibid., 532.

206 Ibid.
Faith is the key element in spirituality that connects a person’s heart and mind to God and His provisions for a spiritual life. “Faith is the hand by which the soul takes hold upon the divine offers of grace and mercy.” Under the presence and help of the Holy Spirit all have to exercise the faith they received in order to enjoy all its spiritual benefits. Nobody can exercise this faith in anyone’s behalf; it has to be done for one’s own life.

Faith involves complete trust in God, and without it “it is impossible to please God” (Heb 1:6), or to live a spiritual life. It should not be forgotten that it was doubting God, or lack of faith, that broke the perfect relationship Adam and Eve had with their Creator in Eden. The restoration of the relationship between humankind and God involves a reversal of the process, and the key of that reversal is faith.

There is no other means to get back to God and to live a spiritual life without faith. “Jesus Christ dwells in the heart through faith.” The restoration of God’s image in humanity, the cultivation of God’s presence, and the experience of holiness, all are possible only by the exercise of faith. Faith is as necessary for spirituality and for salvation just as necessary is the sacrifice of Christ. All God’s heroes overcame by faith (Heb 11). No wonder the Bible says, “The righteous” “will live by his faith” (Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17).

Faithfulness is the fruit of faith. It involves love and obedience (Matt 22:37-39; 19:17). Faithfulness is exactly what can be seen in the lives of those giants of spirituality described in Heb 11 and in other parts of the Scripture. Never is faith genuine without

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208Winn, 18.
faithfulness—without the presence of love and obedience to the Law of God. On the contrary, one who pretends to have faith, but does not have love "is nothing" (1 Cor 13:2). And faith without love, or is not accompanied and proved by acts of obedience "is dead" (Jas 2:17). In this sense, faithfulness is the measure of spirituality. Without faithfulness, spirituality would be reduced to emotionalism or legalism.

Faithfulness is also part of what the Bible calls "the fruit of the Spirit." All the fruits of the Spirit will be present in the life of the spiritual person; not one will be missing. But faithfulness is chosen here to signify more than a simple component of spirituality. It is meant to be at the center of the "normative Christian experience" of the spiritual person. Faithfulness is related to the covenant relationship between God and His people. It "characterizes" both "God's loyalty to His covenant people" and people's loyalty to God.

The faithfulness of God is the main and constant theme of the Bible. Jesus is called "the faithful and true witness" (Rev 3:14), "the Faithful and True" (Rev 19:11). Just as God is both faithful and loving to His people, the spiritual people need to reveal faithfulness and steadfast love in their relationship with God. In fact, due to the

210 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal 5:22-23).


212 Ibid., 403

213 See Ps 89 and 119. God is "the faithful God who keeps His covenant" (Deut 7:9); and chooses Israel (Isa 49:7); great is His faithfulness (Lam 3:23); God's faithfulness is the source of Christian deliverance from temptation (1 Cor 10:13); assurance of salvation (Heb 10:23); and forgiveness of sins (1 John 1:9).

covenant relationship, God's faithfulness is expected to be deeply reflected in the lives of His people (1 Cor 4:2; Gal 5:22) so that they can be called simply "the faithful" (Ps 31:23).215

The Bible proves and speaks of the faithfulness of God's great spiritual men and women.216 While God's faithfulness to His people is a gracious act, human faithfulness to God is an act of responsibility,217 love, and obedience. This does not mean that faithfulness is required as a means to earn salvation or sustain God's favor; it is simply the only appropriate response open to the spiritual person toward a faithful God.218 Thus, faithfulness is intrinsically connected to spirituality. In its biblical sense, faithfulness is an expression of spirituality. A spiritual person is a faithful person. An unfaithful person is not and cannot be spiritual. Faithfulness to God is grounded in faith (Heb 11), motivated by love, and expressed by obedience (John 14:15; Matt 22:37-40).

Hindrances to the Spiritual Life

Satan is the biggest enemy and hindrance against whom the spiritual person has to fight (Eph 6:11-12). He attacks from every angle (1 Pet 5:8). Men or women in their own power are not able to resist Satan. Satan uses the world with all its attractions; he uses people's physical and emotional state in order to make them separate from God (Matt

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216 The Bible speaks of the faithfulness of Abraham (Neh 9:8); Moses (Num 12:7; Heb 3:5); David (1 Kgs 3:6); Hezekiah (2 Chr 31:20); Paul (1 Cor 7:25); Timothy (1 Cor 4:17); Tychicus (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7); Epaphras (Col 1:7; 4:17); Onesimus (Col 4:29), etc.

217 Burge, 402.

218 Ibid.
4:1-11). The evil one uses other people (1 Cor 15:33) and all kinds of temptations to lead all into sin in order to hinder or destroy their spirituality.

The second greatest hindrance to the spiritual life is a person’s own self or sinful nature. There is a permanent conflict between the Spirit of God and the sinful nature, an ongoing war between the spiritual life and self (Gal 5:17). It is said that the battle against self is “the greatest battle that was ever fought.” It is the love of self that destroys a person’s peace and communion with God. When self is alive, a person will fight continually “to guard it from mortification and insult.”

Self is the main device Satan tries to use in order to lead people into sin and destroy their relationship with God. Pride, independence, self-exaltation are all fruits of life centered on self. “It is Satan who perverts one’s powers, and fills the heart with thoughts of self-exaltation.” It was because of the spirit of self-exaltation that Satan and his angels “were expelled from heaven.” Anyone who yields to this spirit of self-exaltation places himself or herself under the control of Satan.

The third hindrance to spirituality is sin. Sin is not only a hindrance to spiritual life but also it breaks the relationship between human beings and God, destroying the spiritual life itself. Sin is terrible in its temptation and consequences. Satan can be kept...

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219Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, 43.


221Ellen G. White, *The Youth’s Instructor*, April 4, 1905, par. 5.


away through the power of God, self can be crucified by faith in Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit, but once temptation is desired and accepted, and sin is committed, the immediate and sure result is separation and spiritual death (Ezek 18:4).

The fourth main hindrance to the spiritual life is the world. The apostle John is very clear when he urges, “Do not love the world or anything in the world” (1 John 2:15). The ‘world’ with all its materialistic elements and attractions constitutes a serious danger and hindrance for the spiritual human being. “The cravings of the sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does,” has the potential to divert the mind from God and His kingdom (1 John 2:16). The main point here is that when the world with its components comes between a person and God, and “is made a center of attention, to the detriment of spiritual life, then it takes the place of God and becomes an idol.”

The emotional state is the fifth hindrance to the spiritual life. The spiritual one has his or her own emotional life as anybody else. The person is not exempt from the battle between feelings and faith, emotions, and spiritual values and principles. Both the Bible and the history of humankind offer plenty of examples of men and women, whose spirituality was altered, and their behavior or course of life changed by simply reacting to the emotion or pressure of the moment.

David and Samson acted sinfully under the power of temptation and of the overwhelming emotion of sexual attraction (2 Sam 11:2-4; Judg 14:1-3). Moses was overcome by emotions of frustration and anger. Elijah collapsed under a sense of helplessness and discouragement. Moses lost his temper and failed to honor God just...
“upon the borders of the Promised Land” (Num 20:10-12). Elijah, after the most successful and memorable day in his life, lost his courage and the sense of God’s presence, “and fled for his life before the threats of the idolatrous Jezebel” and desired to die (1 Kgs 19:3-5).

Others like Martin Luther, Charles Spurgeon, and J. B. Philips were struggling with repeatedly periods of emotional distress throughout their entire life. Ellen White summarizes well these hindrances to spirituality;

When the mind dwells upon self, it is turned away from Christ, the source of strength and life. Hence it is Satan’s constant effort to keep the attention diverted from the Saviour and thus prevent the union and communion of the soul with Christ. The pleasures of the world, life’s cares and perplexities and sorrows, the faults of others, or your own faults and imperfections—to any or all of these he will seek to divert the mind. . . . Many who are really conscientious, and who desire to live for God, he too often leads to dwell upon their own faults and weaknesses, and thus by separating them from Christ he hopes to gain the victory.

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226 Ellen White, The Desire of Ages, 120.

227 Dwight L. Carlson, Why Do Christians Shoot Their Wounded? (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 38-40. Martin Luther, the great leader of the Reformation, experienced periods of terrible emotional distress throughout his life. In 1527, he wrote the following: “For more than a week I was close to the gates of death and hell. I trembled in all my members. Christ was wholly lost. I was shaken by desperation and blasphemy of God.” He found himself “subject to recurrent periods of exaltation and depression of spirit. This oscillation of mood plagued him throughout his life.” Luther himself stated that “the content of the depressions was always the same, the loss of faith that God is good and that he is good to me.”

Charles Spurgeon, one of the great preachers of all time . . . who displayed unwavering commitment to Christ also lived with great emotional turmoil. “From boyhood days dreadful moods of depression repeatedly tormented [him],” one biographer wrote. His despondency forced him to be absent from his pulpit two to three months out of the year. In 1866 he openly shared his struggle with his congregation: “I am the subject of depressions of spirit so fearful that I hope none of you ever get to such extremes of wretchedness as I go (through).” During these depressions, he said, “Every mental and spiritual labor . . . had to be carried on under protest of spirit.”

J. B. Philips, who is known by his book, Your God Is Too Small and his translation of the New Testament translation, once said, “God has never been known to disappoint the man who is sincerely wanting to co-operate with His own purposes.” But on another occasion he said, “It’s truly a devastating thing . . . to be ill in your innermost spirit.” His dark thoughts and mental pain seemed to lock him in a prison with no key. Irrational fears would grip him at night, unreal guilt swept over him, and his sense of God disappeared. . . . Philips called it ‘the night of the soul.’ His wife indicates that he had to cope with psychological disturbance and dark depression for a period of fifty years.”

228 Ellen White, Steps to Christ, 71.
Whatever comes between the spiritual man or woman and God, whatever turns the mind away from Christ, and whatever separates either one from a constant relationship with the Holy Spirit—the source of their spirituality—becomes a hindrance to one's own spiritual life. Even the good things of life, or relationships with other people, when they become the main focus of the mind, can turn out into a hindrance for spirituality.

Thus, it is evident that the battle the spiritual person has to fight is spiritual, and the hindrances to the spiritual life are maneuvered by "the spiritual forces of evil" (Eph 6:11). Therefore, in order to overcome all hindrances, the spiritual one needs to be aware of them and to preventively address them. He or she needs to undertake an intentional process of spiritual formation, and pursue a constant relationship with God through the daily practice of biblical spiritual disciplines.

Spiritual Formation, the Path to Spirituality

The Need for Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation is the process through which those who love and trust God take on His character, and grow in conformity to the image of Christ. In spiritual formation the believer relates to God through Christ and is sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual formation is important for God because it is His main avenue for a new relationship with humankind. This can be seen in both the New and the Old Testament.


230 Boa, Conformed to His Image, 515.
For example, the ceremonial system of the Old Covenant was a spiritual formation school where a sinner was taught to walk with God toward spiritual restoration. The main reason for an earthly sanctuary was that “I may dwell among them,” said the Lord (Exod 25:8).

In the New Testament, Jesus’ training of the twelve disciples was a spiritual formation program. Jesus taught them by word and example the wonders of spirituality and how to grow in grace and into His own likeness. And the results were amazing: “When the disciples came forth from the Savior’s training, they were no longer ignorant and uncultured. They had become like Him in mind and character, and men took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.”

Spiritual formation is critically important for humankind, because after conversion and being made righteous, they still possess a sinful nature with tendencies and “desires” “contrary to the Spirit” (Gal 5:16). In spiritual formation a person is able to “keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal 5:25), is “led by the Spirit” (Gal 5:18), and obtains victory by the Spirit (Gal 5:16-17).

For God, spiritual formation is an intentional plan with a clear purpose, to bring His sons and daughters back to his original relationship with Him. It is “a journey of faith, a path to spiritual wholeness,” on which God and His children commit to take together. The spiritual person does not live for this world. His or her final destination is the kingdom of glory, where he will see God and live in communion with Him forever. This time on earth is the time of the kingdom of grace, the time of preparation, in which

231Ellen White, The Desire of Ages, 250.

232Mulholland, Invitation to a Journey, 168.
humans, by faith, experiences a continuing communion and living relationship with the King. Spiritual formation is learning to live with the King now; it is practicing the presence of the King in this part of the kingdom. The ultimate purpose of spiritual person is salvation of his or her soul. “Spiritual formation is inseparable from salvation.” It involves the working out of our salvation which God calls for (Phil 2:12). It is experiencing salvation now, through faith, and within a growing relationship with God.

The author’s conclusion is that the only path to spirituality is through spiritual formation. The relationship with God through Christ and the Holy Spirit is central to spirituality. Once the relationship is established, it needs time and structure in order to be built, for this relationship is initiated by the Holy Spirit, and implies an invitation to know God and to live in union with Him. For Mulholland this is “the primal reality of human existence.” “Every event of life,” Mulholland says, is to be “an experience of spiritual formation.” For Lawrenz, this is a “dynamic, growing relationship.” And for Callen, this dynamic growing relationship is the “basic core of spiritual formation.”


234 Ibid., 45.

235 Gemignani, Spiritual Formation for Pastors, 49.


237 Lawrenz, 28.

238 Callen, 11.
One Word of Caution

One word of caution is necessary to be mentioned here. Even the spiritual formation approach for a true spiritual life can be misused and can degenerate into self-righteousness. Satan constantly tempts all to wrongly use God's greatest means and gifts of grace. The principle that human beings can save themselves by their own works was implanted by Satan at the foundation of every pagan religion.239

Although God was the one who designed the Jewish religion and “Christ was the foundation and center of the sacrificial system,” Israel accepted Satan’s counterfeit and became corrupt using the very gift of God as a human means to earn God’s favor. The very satanic principle that turns the mind from God and separates the soul from his Creator “became the principle of the Jewish religion.”240 A true spiritual person will depend only on God and Christ’s merits, and will submit his or her life totally under the guidance and protection of the Holy Spirit.

Three Main Components of Spiritual Formation

John M. Dettoni discovered in the New Testament three key biblical words that are foundational for spiritual formation. They are: (1) formation, (2) discipleship, and (3) maturity.241 Formation (morphe) found in Rom 12:2 and 2 Cor 3:18, suggests that the inner being of the person is radically altered so that he or she is no longer the same. According to Dettoni, formation requires knowledge, a change in behavior based upon

239 Ellen White, The Desire of Ages, 36.

240 Ellen White, God’s Amazing Grace, 43.

that knowledge, and even more, a continual transformation of the inner being, which means that the person is changed from the “old” to the “new,” being conformed to Christ’s image\textsuperscript{242} (Gal 4:19).

Discipleship (Matt 28:19), is following Jesus. When Jesus called men to be His disciples, they had to leave behind everything else.\textsuperscript{243} They had to “deny” themselves, “take up the cross daily, and follow Him,” to be ready and willing to lose even their lives for Jesus, when necessary (Luke 9:23-24). One of the most concrete ways of following Jesus, concludes Dettoni, involves “patterning our life after His. This patterning means that we seek to do what He did . . . live a life filled with prayer, quiet service, Scripture reading, mediation, worship, and fasting to name a few.”\textsuperscript{244} And maturity (Col 1:28-29), implies the fruit of the process, the result of patterning life after the life of Christ; “to become mature, complete, and perfect like Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{245}

**Practicing the Presence of God**

Focusing on Christ is pursuing God’s presence. Jesus says, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). “Throughout His life on earth Jesus had walked in the light of God’s presence.”\textsuperscript{246} This is exactly what the Holy Spirit intends to perform with people within the process of spiritual formation.

\textsuperscript{242}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{243}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{244}Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{245}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{246}Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, 685.
The truth is that the spiritual person can be formed only in the presence of God.\textsuperscript{247} In order for this to happen, the spiritual person gives to God all his or her time, work, and full attention in the midst of all life's routines.\textsuperscript{248} And this is more than pursuing; it is practicing\textsuperscript{249} the presence of God. Practicing the presence of God is living in "company with Jesus all day long."\textsuperscript{250} It is what Brother Lawrence says, to "think on Him perpetually,"\textsuperscript{251} and converse with Him continually.\textsuperscript{252} Or as in the case of Frank Laubach, it is trying to keep "in constant touch with God, making Him the object of thought and the companion of . . . conversations,"\textsuperscript{253} every minute of the "waking hours."\textsuperscript{254} It is to live "in union with the Trinity"\textsuperscript{255} every moment.

The benefits of practicing the presence of God are infinite. God's presence through Christ and the Holy Spirit satisfies the thirst and the hunger of the soul (John 7:37; 6:33). It brings victory over all enemies. God's presence rescues from dangers,


\textsuperscript{248}Keefauver, 133.


\textsuperscript{250}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{251}Gene Edwards, Practicing His Presence: Brother Lawrence, Frank Laubach (Augusta, ME: Christian Books, 1973), 84.


\textsuperscript{253}Gene Edwards, 15.


\textsuperscript{255}Calhoun, 59.
protects against spiritual enemies, brings answers to prayer, saves from troubles, delivers from difficulties, prolongs life, and assures salvation (Ps 91:14-16).

In God’s presence “all needs are met, all priorities are ordered, and all goals are directed.” Ellen White puts it so well, “As a shield from temptation and an inspiration to purity and truth, no other influence can equal the sense of God’s presence.” In line with this thought she states, “If you will do everything as if you were in the immediate presence of God, you will be saved from yielding to temptation and may hope to be kept pure, spotless, and undefiled till the last.” Through this she implies purity in “thoughts of the heart, the words of the lips, and every act of the life” if “the presence of God is continually” experienced.

There is a question here to be answered though. How does the spiritual person practice the presence of God? The answer is simple; it is accomplished by faith and by the daily practice of spiritual disciplines.

**Spiritual Disciplines, Means to Spirituality**

This section deals with the concept of spiritual disciplines, their definition, their importance, need, and benefits for spirituality. The section outlines twenty two disciplines of spiritual life of which watchfulness is suggested as a new discipline.

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256 Keefauver, 110.


Importance, Definition, Need, and Benefits

Commitment and faithfulness of the spiritual person to God, to himself, and to humanity cannot last unless the spiritual life is a “life of discipleship.” The spiritual life must be nurtured.” The wonderful encounter with God that generates spirituality in humankind necessitates a permanent walk with Him, for a mature “spiritual life does not come automatically with conversion.” Spiritual transformation—spiritual maturity comes in relationship with the Holy Spirit who provides for the spiritual human being spiritual practices that best suit a unique communion with God.

Spiritual disciplines are “the heart” of spiritual formation. They are spiritual practices that promote spiritual growth on the journey toward wholeness in the image of Christ. Maxson calls them “tools of discipleship,” or skills that help the spiritual person to focus on Christ, and integrate Him in every area of his or her life. Whitney considers the spiritual disciplines as ways to place people in connection with God to become godly, or “channels of God’s transforming grace” into godliness. This requires training.

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260 Kis, 15.
261 Richards, A Practical Theology of Spirituality, 15.
262 Calhoun, 19.
263 Willsey, 131.
265 Mulholland, 75.
266 Maxson, Seeking God’s Heart, 3.
267 Ibid., 8.
268 Whitney, 19.
The word in Greek for training or exercise (discipline in the New American Standard Bible) (1 Tim 4:7), is *gumnaze*, from which the words gymnastics and gymnasium are derived. It is a word that means strenuous effort. This is the expression the apostle Paul uses when he writes to Timothy. In the words of Paul, the training he is talking about is for spiritual growth towards godliness (1 Tim 4:7).

The effort implied here is not for people to make themselves like Christ or to earn some merits into salvation. Rather it is the persistent effort the spiritual person puts in setting his or her mind “on what the Spirit desires” (Rom 8:5); an effort necessary in the battle against the sinful nature (Rom 8:12-13). It is what Paul meant when he stated, “In your struggle against sin, you have not resisted to the point of shedding your blood” (Heb 12:4). It is the effort the spiritual person has to put when physical and emotional exhaustion confront the spiritual life. It is the necessary effort in the middle of daily distractions, temptations, rejections, and busy life to keep in touch with God, the only One who can transform and save. It should not be forgotten that grace is not opposed to effort but to earning personal merits.

Kenneth Boa, in his book *Conformed to His Image*, gives a clarifying list of a few of the benefits of practicing the spiritual disciplines. His list provides a quick overview

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269 Hull, 67.

270 Boa, 75.

271 Ibid., 80. 1. “They encourage imitation of Christ and allow us to act in ways that are centered in God’s will. 2. They connect us with an ongoing tradition of time-tested ways of incarnating the spiritual life. 3. They give us a rule of conduct that directs us in the path of growing skill in living before God. 4. They equip us with resources on the three warfare fronts of the world, the flesh, and the demonic. 5. They confer perspective and power, and they encourage us to embrace God’s purpose for our lives. 6. They bestow a controlled freedom to respond to changing circumstances in a more biblical manner; they allow our lives to be dominated more by the things above than the things below. 7. They remind us daily that the spiritual life is a balance between radical dependence and responsible action; both grace and self-discipline are required for spiritual maturity. 8. They are vehicles for internal transformation. Given enough time, an
that is helpful in understanding the importance of spiritual disciplines for the spiritual life. However, both Boa and Foster call attention to the danger of misusing the disciplines. If people’s attention is not focused on Christ, and their purpose is not to practice God’s presence, then the spiritual disciplines can degenerate into laws, and people may “slip into the trap of thinking that they have value in themselves.” Thus they can be turned into acts of self “righteousness.”

Richard Foster argues that in spite of the fact that spiritual disciplines involve work, human effort, their purpose is “freedom.” Foster considers that disciplines are of no value in themselves; they are “for the purpose of realizing a greater good.” “They have value only as a means of setting man before God so that God can transform” each person completely. They are habits that shape character and bring one’s life “under the lordship of Christ and the control of the Spirit so that the life of Christ can be manifested in man,” and the presence of God may come naturally to him.

To learn from Jesus, and to follow Him now, is nothing else but patterning the spiritual life after His. Or in the words of Dallas Willard, “by practicing the types of

average person who consistently practices spiritual disciplines will achieve spiritual productivity and proficiency. 9. They replace habits of sin by cultivating habits that lead to character (e.g., integrity, faithfulness, and compassion). 10. They increase our willingness to acknowledge the daily cost of discipleship and remind us that whatever comes quickly and cheaply is superficial, while the insights that we learn from pain will endure.”

272Ibid.

273Foster, Celebration of Discipline, 9-10.

274Ibid., 110.

275Boa, 79.

activities he engaged in.” In this respect Willard’s comment appears as one of the most relevant and most quoted by the authors who have written in the area of spirituality.”

By Christ’s activities, Willard means spiritual disciplines, of which he mentions, “silence, prayer, simple and sacrificial living, intense study, and meditation upon God’s Word, and God’s ways, and service to others.”

Categorizing the Spiritual Disciplines

The list of the overviewed spiritual disciplines in this section is longer than those of the writers mentioned in this paper and differs from theirs in the way is categorized. The list is divided into three categories. They are (1) spiritual fundamental disciplines, (2) the disciplines of environment, and (3) the disciplines of effect or obedience. The spiritual fundamental disciplines are considered the disciplines of prayer, study of the Word, and worship. They represent the source and basis for all the other disciplines of spiritual life. The disciplines of environment (solitude, silence and fasting) are the disciplines which provide the best environment for the spiritual person in which communion with God through prayer, study and worship takes place. The disciplines of effect or obedience (meditation, memorization, confession, guidance, sacrifice simplicity, chastity, secrecy, frugality, submission, service, stewardship, and witnessing, fellowship, celebration, and journaling, watchfulness) are practices that represent immediate effects of the three fundamental disciplines of spiritual life or are acts of obedience to the will of

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277 Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, ix. “My central claim,” affirms Willard, “is that we can become like Christ by doing one thing—by following Him in the overall style of life He chose for Himself. If we have faith in Christ, we must believe that He knew how to live. We can, through faith and grace, become like Christ by practicing the types of activities he engaged in, by arranging our whole lives around the activities He Himself practiced in order to remain constantly at home in the fellowship of his Father.”

278 Ibid.
God revealed in the Word by prayer and under a spirit of worship.

Most of the authors on spirituality do not include all of the disciplines in their books. They also differ among themselves in the way they list or categorize the disciplines. One discipline that is missing from all the writers quoted in this paper, except Ellen White, is the discipline of watchfulness. The discipline of watchfulness is suggested in this paper as a valid biblical discipline with significant importance for the spiritual life.

Writers differ slightly from one another in their view over the importance of the disciplines as well. While there is a general consensus regarding the central role and the prominence of prayer and study of the Word over all the other spiritual disciplines, important voices advocate for solitude as “being the most fundamental of the disciplines.” The author of this paper disagrees with this claim. While it is true that solitude has an important role in spirituality and the spiritual person needs to have special times when to be alone with God, the Bible supports other spiritual disciplines as more fundamental for spirituality and without which the spiritual life is impossible.

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279 Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 158. Willard, for example, develops a twofold list of disciplines of abstinence (solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, secrecy, and sacrifice), and disciplines of engagement (study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, and submission); Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 110. Foster divides the spiritual disciplines in three categorizes: inward disciplines (prayer, study, meditation, and fasting), outward disciplines (simplicity, solitude, submission, and service), and corporate disciplines (confession, worship, guidance, and celebration); Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 83-86. Boa makes up a list of twenty spiritual disciplines adding to the lists of Willard and Foster the disciplines of journaling, stewardship, and witnessing; Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 5. Whitney has a list of eleven spiritual disciplines with learning as the only discipline different from the other writers; Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 81. Mulholland brings back to the topic the old classical pilgrimage with the four stages of awakening, purgation, illumination, and union. In addition to the other writers, he presents retreat as a spiritual discipline.

Along with prayer and the study of the Word, worship is claimed as being totally fundamental for a living relationship with God and for an authentic spirituality. The truth is that worship is so vast and multifaceted that even prayer is part of it. If prayer is not an act of worship, then it is only a monolog or a dialogue with God from which adoration, respect, praise, and reverence are missing. Yes, the Word appears ahead of worship in importance, because the Word is where worship finds its source, its meaning, and its boundaries. But once the heart is connected to the Word, what happens if the Word is approached without a spirit of worship? No wonder that the central message of the everlasting Gospel is a call to worship God, not a call to solitude, or silence, or even fasting.

To worship God the way He deserves and wants is the main message of the Bible. Then, it does not matter whether the spiritual one is in the desert or in the midst of the crowd, whether he or she worships the Father “on this mountain” or “in Jerusalem;” what really matters is that the person is a “true worshiper” that “worships the Father in spirit and truth,” for this is “the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.” “For God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth” (John 4:21-24).

If all the other disciplines are separated from a spirit of worship, then their practice can take the performer away from the real presence of God. Consequently, it takes him or her away from a relationship that is most important in life, and that is meant to transform each person into the likeness of the Creator. The whole Scripture stands as an evidence of this claim, and the new haven and the new earth will stand as an eternal testimony of the fact that not only love will never perish, but also worship will never

cease; for worship will go on forever; worship will never end (Rev 7:11; 19:4-9).

This is the conclusion; if the prayer life is real, if the spiritual one feeds on the Word, and if the spirit of authentic worship is present, then all the other disciplines will find their proper place in the spiritual life. They will be used at the proper time and in a proper way as the Spirit leads.

In this paper, worship, prayer and the study of the Word stand as fundamental for all the other spiritual disciplines of the spiritual life. Solitude, silence and fasting are called the disciplines of environment because they represent the best environment for prayer, study of the Word and worship. All the other disciplines are arranged under the disciplines of effect or obedience and are seen as natural effects of the first three, or an act of obedience to God that constitutes that effect.282

An Overview of Twenty-Two Spiritual Disciplines

In this section a short overview of the twenty-two disciplines will be presented. Additional space will be given to a number of them in chapter five of this paper and in the appendices.

282 Meditation-contemplation, and memorization are elements of prayer and study. Witnessing is a fruit of salvation which in turn is based on faith, prayer, study of the Bible, and worship. Fasting, solitude and silence represent both the best environment for prayer, study, meditation, and memorization and an effect of them. Confession and guidance are again a result of the revelation obtained form the Word and governed by prayer. Sacrifice has to do with a spirit of obedience which is requested in the Word and received as a result of authentic prayer. But sacrifice in turn includes simplicity, chastity, secrecy, frugality, submission, service, stewardship, and witnessing. All these practices are acts of obedience that lead to sacrifice, even to the supreme sacrifice—to death if necessary. Fellowship, celebration, and journaling are forms of expression of joy, and gratefulness as an answer to the blessings received from God through a life of prayer and study and obedience. Watchfulness can go step by step with prayer and shoulder to shoulder with fasting as an expression of total dependence on God and of the commitment to never leave His protective presence. And all of them together can be considered as acts of authentic worship to God.
The Fundamental Disciplines of Spiritual Life

As already noted, prayer, study of the Word, and worship are considered the fundamental disciplines of spiritual life. They are the three pillars on which the whole building of spiritual life is built. Nothing can substitute for these three for they are the foundation and the source of all the other spiritual disciplines.

The discipline of prayer

Prayer is communion with God; it is “opening the heart to God as to a friend.”283 Foster declares that prayer is “the most central” of all the other spiritual disciplines for one reason; “it ushers us into the perpetual communion with the Father.”284 Prayer was the heart of Christ’s devotional life and the heart of the relationship with God of all spiritual men and women in all times. Prayer keeps all people in God’s presence all the time. Prayer changes; prayer transforms people into Christ’s image.285 There is no place or circumstance where a person cannot be in connection with God through prayer. Therefore Paul says, “Pray continually” (1 Thess 5:17).

The discipline of study

Studying the Word of God is listening to God’s voice that talks to people personally, revealing Himself to them. It is learning about God,286 about His character,

283 Ellen White, Steps to Christ, 93.

284 Foster, Celebration of Disciplines, 33.

285 Keith Drury, There Is No I in the Church: Moving Beyond Individual Spirituality to Experience God’s Power in the Church (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan House, 2006), 42.

His plans and His will regarding one’s life. It is the most important means God uses besides the sacrifice of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit for one’s transformation into the image of God (2 Tim 3:15-17). It represents the ground for faith, the source of spirituality, and the boundaries for the relationship with God. Nothing can substitute for studying the Word. There is no spiritual life without the Word. The encounter with the Word in a proper way and proper spirit is the encounter with the Author of the Word, with One who is called “the Word,” and who is God Himself (John 1:1-3).

The discipline of worship

According to Joe Kidder, “Worship is an active response to God whereby we declare His worth.”287 Worship is the deepest “human response”288 “to a divine revelation.”289 Worship involves “adoration, exaltation, reverence, and submission.”290 Commenting on these, Kidder states that “in reverence we acknowledge God’s worth; in submission, we acknowledge His authority. In exaltation, we lift Him up with our expression of adoration. That, in summary, is true worship.”291

The revelation of God’s perfect character, along with His great love, His majestic attributes, His mighty acts, and His divine worthiness make such an impact upon the spiritual person that a spirit of authentic worship follows instantaneously. Love for God,
in the heart of spiritual people, expressed through a spirit of obedience, gratefulness, and thanksgiving is the core motivation of worship.

Worship is commanded by God (Exod 23:24), it is sought by Him in the lives of His children (John 4:23), and it is rewarded by God with great blessings (Exod 23:25). God is worshipped in heaven (Isa 6:1-3). He was worshipped in both the Old and the New Testament, and will be worshiped in the kingdom of heaven (Exod 34:8; Luke 2:37; Rev 11:6).

The motivation for worship is twofold. First, people worship God for they are the creatures and God is the Creator. Second, people worship God for they are object of Christ’s sacrifice and God is the Savior. Nothing is more beautiful, more rewarding, more necessary, more honorable, and more transforming for people as the act of worshiping God in the right way, from the right motives, and in right spirit.

In true worship the spiritual person experiences the deepest sense of God’s presence. God must be there when the act of worship takes place. And when one really worships God in spirit and truth, the Lord is always there to bless. God seeks true worshipers (John 4:23), for within the context of worship God performs all the miracles of the spiritual life, and the relationship with each person is kept at the highest level possible. When worshiping is in spirit and truth, the true worshiper becomes like God in mind and in character.

The Disciplines of Environment

Most of life is lived in relation to people, in the midst of daily activities, and under the continual pressure of existential needs. Life with God though can go on in the midst of all these, needs special times when no interruption takes place, no other activity
interferes, and not even the closest human being is around. Fasting, which among its healthy effects, offers the body rest and helps the mind have more energy for spiritual things, along with solitude and silence that make the communion with God easier, are the disciplines that provide the best environment for a deep and refreshing relationship with God. Therefore, they are called the disciplines of environment.

The discipline of fasting

The spiritual discipline of fasting is abstinence from “physical nourishment” for spiritual purposes, and for a limited period of time. It is a mark of religious commitment and devotion to God or an expression of repentance for sins (Joel 2:12). Throughout the Bible, fasting is practiced by countless children of God, for specific reasons and with great benefits. When practiced with the right motives, fasting is a physical expression of humility and total dependence on God (Dan 9:1-19).

“The spirit of true fasting and prayer is the spirit which yields mind, heart, and will to God.” The attention is totally on God, and on the revelation of His will. Both the body and the mind are better prepared to live in God’s presence, to hear God’s voice, understand His revelation, and accept His will. Effective fasting most frequently involves other disciplines such as prayer, the focus on the Word, watchfulness, and worship (Matt 4:1-2; Luke 2:37). It also involves a spirit of love compassion, and justice (Isa 58:6-7). Fasting goes perfectly with solitude and silence too.

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292 Boa, 84.

293 Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Diet and Foods* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1938), 189.
The discipline of solitude

Solitude as a spiritual discipline is a special time when the soul is alone with God. It is what Jesus said, “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen” (Matt 6:6). Solitude makes the sense of God’s presence to be better experienced. Solitude was part of Jesus’ devotional life (Matt 4:1-11; Luke 6:12) and suggested to His disciples (Mark 6:31).

The discipline of silence

Silence is that attitude of quietness in approaching God that makes His voice and presence more evident. No words, no other influences interfere; the soul is “still,” and then the voice of God is heard clearly, “know that I am God” (Ps 46:10).

“Solitude and silence are companion disciplines; silence gives depth to solitude, and solitude creates a place for silence.”

The Disciplines of Effect or Obedience

The effects of an abundant and constant prayer life, of a life fed on the Word, and sustained by an attitude of worshiping God will be seen in the life of the spiritual human being in a series of other spiritual practices. These other practices are either immediate effects of the three fundamental pillars of spiritual life or acts of obedience to the will of God revealed in the Word by prayer and under a spirit of worship. None of the disciplines listed in this section is an independent discipline that is practiced outside of the Word, without prayer, or separated from a spirit of worship. If they are, they turn out in acts of self righteousness. This is way they are called disciplines of effect or obedience.

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294Boa, 88.
The discipline of meditation

Meditation is closely connected to the study of the Word and is thinking and reflecting on God and His Word. Through meditation and under the influence of the Spirit, one “enters into the living presence of God” spending quality time with Him. It is drawing close to God and listening to Him, pondering on His character (Ps 63:6), on His promises (Ps 119:148), on His Law (Ps 119:97), on Christ and the Plan of Salvation (Heb 12:2), on His kingdom (Col 3:1-2), on His Creation (Ps 8:3-4), on His mighty acts (Ps 77:12), or on other aspects of God’s Self-Revelation.

Meditation is important for the spiritual life as digestion of food is important for the body. Without meditation upon God and His Word, people lose touch with God and with spiritual things. The importance of meditation rests in its benefits, and in the fact that is commanded by God (Josh 1:8), and is practiced by Jesus Himself.296

The discipline of guidance

“Guidance is seeking God’s leadership and recognizing God’s lordship in all areas of our lives.”297 In seeking guidance one seeks God’s will and direction for everything in life. The spiritual discipline of guidance is rooted in a life of study and prayer. The Word of God is the revelation of God’s will for all the relationships each person has in life. Studied with prayer and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the Word becomes “a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Ps 119:105). The discipline of guidance is one of the main characteristics of the spiritual life and is present in the

295Foster, 24.
296Ellen G. White, Youth’s Instructor, September 1, 1873, par. 8.
Bible in the lives of all God's faithful children. The expression “the word of the LORD came to me” (Ezek 38:1; Gen 15:1), “and hear the word of the LORD” (Hos 4:1) are present throughout the history of God's people.

The discipline of journaling

Spiritual Journaling is keeping a record of a journey one has with God. It is a record of God's guidance in life. Keeping a journal is one of the disciplines that helps to grow in grace and in the knowledge of God. The journal can be a mirror in the hands of the Holy Spirit in which He reveals the story of God's presence in life, His mighty acts, and the perspective He has on attitudes, thoughts, words, and actions.298 It becomes one of the best ways to develop a closer walk with God; It becomes a “book of experience”299 or providence for those who learn the discipline of keeping an account of God's presence in life.

The Bible itself is like a great journal of a great journey of God with humanity. The great events of creation and salvation are written as in a journal. The Bible is God's Journal written by human agents. Parts of the Bible that clearly pieces of human journals, others are “records of David's personal spiritual journey with the Lord.”300 Men of God like Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Paul, John, and other prophets, include personal insights, personal questions, personal doubts, personal disappointments, personal

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297 Tasker, 341.

298 Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, 208.


300 Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, 206.
discoveries, personal struggles, personal victories, and personal failures. Their example of keeping a record of God’s presence in their lives is worthy to be followed.

The discipline of sacrifice

In the words of Willard, sacrifice is “total abandonment to God . . . in the faith and hope that God will bear us up.”\(^{301}\) It is an act of direct service to God or to His children that involves giving away all one has or what is essential for both the giver and the receiver. Abraham is one of the best examples of sacrifice when he was ready to offer Isaac as a burnt offering to the Lord (Gen 22:7-12). The poor widow in the time of Jesus who gave “all she had” is another adequate example (Luke 21:4). However, the best way to understand what sacrifice is all about is looking to Jesus. “Jesus Christ . . . though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9).

Sacrifice involves a spirit of love, which is proven through good deeds for the benefit of others. In the case of Christ it was expressed through obedience “to death and even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8). The spirit of sacrifice is foundational for the practice of other disciplines as stewardship, service, simplicity, chastity, secrecy, frugality, submission, and witnessing. The spirit of sacrifice is the spirit of heaven. When one has this spirit and manifests it consistently, he lives the life that will be highly appreciated by the King Jesus on the day of the final rewarding (Matt 25:31-40).

\(^{301}\) Willard, 175.
The discipline of stewardship

“Stewardship is the lifestyle of one who accepts Christ’s lordship, walking in partnership with God and acting as God’s agent to manage His affairs on earth.”

People belong to God through creation and redemption. That means that they have an obligation to devote to God their entire being, along with all their time and goods. Stewardship is a discipline of great responsibility, dignity, honor, and gratefulness.

The discipline of service

Service is part of stewardship; it is doing what a good steward has to do. It is a visible expression of fulfilling the responsibilities one has to God and to others. It is living for God in relationship to the needy, the poor, the sick, and the like (Matt 25:34:45). Jesus is the perfect example of servanthood. His greatness is seen in being the Servant of all. “I am among you as one who serves,” He says. Service is the measure of true faithfulness to God and the measure of true greatness (Luke 22:26).

The discipline of simplicity

The discipline of simplicity relates to the attitude of the spiritual person and the use of the resources that have been placed at his or her disposal. According to Boa, the discipline of simplicity refers to a willingness to abstain from using those resources for human’s own “gratification and aggrandizement.” Simplicity is “doing one thing,” or bringing the entire life under only one purpose. In the words of the apostle Paul, he states,

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302 Maxson, Principles of Stewardship, 1.
303 Boa, 85.
304 Ibid.
"Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Cor 10:31). The spiritual discipline of simplicity begins in the heart where a person seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then everything else lines up outwardly to its "proper order."  

The discipline of chastity

Chastity is a state of not having sexual relationship with anyone, or not with anyone except the person one is married to. Chastity is like the other disciplines, listed in this section, more a result of a life centered on the Word, and substantiated by prayer and worship than an isolated practice. It has to do with the attitude toward sexual needs or attractions. Willard defines chastity as “turning away from dwelling upon or engaging in the sexual dimension of our relationships to others.”

"An essential part of the discipline of chastity consists in the practice of abstaining from sex and from indulging in sexual feelings and thoughts, and thus learning how to not be governed by them.” Within marriage chastity is expressed through temporary abstention which is based upon mutual agreement between the husband and wife, and which is for spiritual purposes (1 Cor 7:5). This is a balanced state in which neither neglecting the sexual needs of the spouse nor placing sexual gratification at the center of family life takes place. “Chastity elevates loving concern for the good of others above personal gratification.”

305 Foster, Principles of Stewardship, 79.
308 Boa, 84.
The discipline of secrecy

Secrecy is “abstaining from causing one’s good deeds and qualities to be known.” The practice of secrecy is rooted in the teaching of Jesus and is followed by great reward from God. “When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you (Matt 6:3-4). It is a practice that involves the humble spirit of Christ and does not care about personal recognition.

The discipline of frugality

Frugality is a form of simplicity; it is “abstaining from using money or goods at one’s “disposal in ways that merely gratify the hunger for status, glamour, or luxury.” Practicing frugality means practicing authentic stewardship, which is more than faithfulness in tithe and offerings, but it is accepting Christ’s lordship in all areas of life, and using all goods according to His will and plans.

The discipline of submission

The biblical teaching on submission focuses primarily on the spirit with which people view others. Submission is giving to others the first place. It means not to “resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If

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310 Ibid.
311 Maxson, Principles of Stewardship, 16.
someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you” (Matt 5:39-42).

The attitude of submission is motivated by a proper attitude to Christ. “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph 5:21). When it is manifested in relationship with God, it means complete surrender to His will. When it is manifested in relationship with others, it is seeking their good, as Paul says, to the point of becoming “all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Cor 9:22).

The discipline of witnessing

Witnessing is reaching out to the lost with the Good News. It is communicating the gospel to the world. It is sharing God or mediating God’s presence to others (Matt 28:18-20). All the other disciplines work together and are ways to make witnessing possible and efficient. Witnessing is more than a discipline; it is a natural effect of the saving encounter with Christ—an immediate and natural prompting in the heart of the spiritual person “to tell others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus.” It becomes a discipline when it comes to learn different ways and approaches of practicing it.

The discipline of confession

“Confession is both a grace and a discipline.” It is a grace because it is prompted by the Holy Spirit. And it is a discipline because one has to learn how to

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312 Whitney, Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, 100.
313 Ellen White, Steps to Christ, 78.
314 Foster, Celebration of Disciplines, 145
practice it. Confession is about sin committed to God or to others. It is “the outpouring of
the inmost soul . . . to the God of infinite pity.”\textsuperscript{315} “For a good confession three things are
necessary: an examination of conscience, sorrow, and determination to avoid sin.”\textsuperscript{316}

According to Ellen White, “True confession is always of a specific character, and
acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as to be brought before God
only; they may be wrongs that should be confessed to individuals who have suffered
injury through them; or they may be of a public character, and should then be as publicly
confessed. But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very
sins of which you are guilty.”\textsuperscript{317} When confession takes place under the influence of the
Holy Spirit, “all human relationships are changed positively.”\textsuperscript{318}

The discipline of fellowship

The spiritual discipline of fellowship is about the quality of spiritual relationships
classified by deep communion and joy. Enjoying the company of other believers is
fellowship. In order for fellowship to be authentic and rewarding it has to include God’s
presence, for only if people have fellowship with Christ, and “walk in the light,” can they
“have” spiritual “fellowship with one another” (1 John 1:6-7). Spiritual activities as
“worship, study, prayer, celebration, and service with other disciples”\textsuperscript{319} give spiritual
meaning to the discipline of fellowship.

\textsuperscript{315}Ellen White, \textit{Steps to Christ}, 37.

\textsuperscript{316}Foster, \textit{Celebration of Disciplines}, 150.

\textsuperscript{317}Ellen White, \textit{Steps to Christ}, 38.

\textsuperscript{318}Willard, \textit{The Spirit of the Disciplines}, 188.

\textsuperscript{319}Ibid., 186.
The discipline of celebration

The discipline of celebration is rejoicing over all that God has done in the life of the spiritual man or woman. They focus on God's mighty acts and express a spirit of gratitude and remembrance.\textsuperscript{320} Thus, celebration is a review\textsuperscript{321} and a rehearsal\textsuperscript{322} of God's presence in the past, and even more; it is reliving\textsuperscript{323} the history of God's presence with its particular blessings. The dominant note of celebration is gratefulness and thanksgiving. It is "taking pleasure, amazement, and joy in how good God has been . . . in specific ways and times." This spiritual practice gives a "new sense of perspective" for the spiritual life.\textsuperscript{324}

The discipline of watchfulness

"Watchfulness is the state of being alert and expectant; watching over someone in one's care or waiting for the arrival of someone important or for some significant event."\textsuperscript{325} As a spiritual discipline, watchfulness involves a state of readiness for the second coming of Christ, and an attitude of being "awake" spiritually so that the soul "will not fall into temptation" (Matt 26:41). But most importantly, regardless of the events to come or any other circumstances, watchfulness is keeping the attention on God.

\textsuperscript{320}Boa, 86.
\textsuperscript{321}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{322}Paulien, 142.
\textsuperscript{323}Boa, 86.
\textsuperscript{324}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{325}Alister E. McGrath, The NIV Thematic Reference Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 2023.
so that nothing may come between Him and the soul.\textsuperscript{326}

**The Contribution of Ellen G. White on Spirituality**

Ellen G. White endorses all biblical teachings on spirituality. A whole and highly accepted dissertation could be written on spirituality based upon only the writings of Ellen G. White. There is not a single concept in this paper that is not addressed in her writings. Beginning with the concept of God’s presence, and continuing with the concept of the kingdom of heaven, the image of God, holiness, covenant, the Cross of Christ and His ministry, the role of the Holy Spirit in spirituality, the need for spiritual growth, and the use of the spiritual disciplines, all concepts find a special place in her writings.\textsuperscript{327}

Even in the general aspects of spirituality where a lot of literature is written her contribution is huge. For example, in 1892 she said that “prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. . . . Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.”\textsuperscript{328} “Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God.”\textsuperscript{329} “Prayer is the breath of the soul, the channel of all blessings”\textsuperscript{330} “Let every breath be


\textsuperscript{327}See Ellen G. White’s The Great Controversy Series.

\textsuperscript{328}Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, 93.

\textsuperscript{329}Ibid., 97.

prayer."\textsuperscript{331} "We must live a twofold life—a life a thought and action, of silent prayer and earnest work."\textsuperscript{332}

Regarding spirituality Ellen White continues: "Then all that is written concerning the spiritual life is written for you, and may be attained through uniting yourself to Jesus."\textsuperscript{333} "You need ever to cultivate spirituality, because it is not natural for you to be heavenly-minded."\textsuperscript{334} "The Christian’s life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit."\textsuperscript{335}

The list could continue but the focus in this section is specifically on her unique contributions on the subject of spirituality. Of her contributions that appear unique on spirituality, two selected concepts will be presented succinctly: (1) Christ’s intercessory ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, and (2) watchfulness as a spiritual tool in practicing God’s presence.

Ellen G White on Spirituality and Christ’s Intercessory Ministry in Heaven

Ellen White’s main and unique contribution on spirituality is connected to Christ’s intercessory ministry in heaven. Based upon both the Old and the New

\textsuperscript{331}Ellen G. White, \textit{The Ministry of Healing} (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1942) 511.

\textsuperscript{332}Ibid., 512.

\textsuperscript{333}Ellen White, \textit{The Desire of Ages}, 389-390.

\textsuperscript{334}Ellen G. White, \textit{Testimonies to the Church} (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 5:520.

\textsuperscript{335}Ellen White, \textit{The Desire of Ages}, 172.
Testament, Ellen White advocates that “the sanctuary in Heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men.” It is a special work that “concerns every soul living upon the earth.” “It is of the utmost importance,” she adds, “that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects.”

Why is Christ’s intercessory ministry in the heavenly sanctuary so important for a person’s spirituality? What does Christ do on one’s behalf? The answer is found in the great controversy theme Ellen White presents in her writings, and in the fact that Christ’s ministry takes place in the context of “the great controversy between good and evil,” “between truth and error.” This controversy between good and evil is not between humanity and Satan, but it is “the great controversy between Christ and Satan, that has been carried forward for nearly six thousand years,” and, “is soon to close.”

Within the great controversy, the battle between Christ and Satan is over this world, and especially over one’s allegiance. “In the great controversy between good and evil,” declares Ellen White, “each one of us has to choose on which side he will stand, and our life and character will make manifest who is our master.” That implies that each one has to choose between spiritual and unspiritual.

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337Ibid., 488-489.
339Ibid., xii.2
340Ibid., 490.
According to Ellen White, the intercessory ministry of Christ in heaven involves a work of judgment, in which His intercessory prayer is indispensable for the eternal destiny of human beings. "The Judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above" she says, "the cases of the living" are brought "in the awful presence of God," and "our lives are to come up in review."\textsuperscript{3}\textsuperscript{4}\textsuperscript{3} It should be noticed, however, that the work of the investigative judgment as a whole, with all the details and implications, is not the purpose of this paper.

Based upon Ellen White's view, both Christ and Satan focus on all people. Christ is doing a special work for humankind to secure for them eternal spirituality and salvation, while Satan works diligently to make sure that all will remain unspiritual—on his side, to the very end. There are two main aspects of this theme Ellen White emphasizes. First, Satan accuses God's children of being unspiritual and unworthy to be saved and to live in the presence of a holy God.\textsuperscript{3}\textsuperscript{4}\textsuperscript{4} Second, Satan uses all the means he has to get everyone on his side and keep them unspiritual—in a state of rebellion against God until Christ finishes His intercessory ministry in heaven.\textsuperscript{3}\textsuperscript{4}\textsuperscript{5} Satan "strengthens the destructive tendencies of man's nature. He brings in envy, jealousy, selfishness,

\textsuperscript{3}\textsuperscript{4}\textsuperscript{3}Ellen White, \textit{The Great Controversy}, 490.

\textsuperscript{3}\textsuperscript{4}\textsuperscript{4}See Ellen White, \textit{Patriarchs and Kings}, 588-589. "Satan has an accurate knowledge of the sins that he has tempted God's people to commit, and he urges his accusations against them, declaring, that by their sins they have forfeited divine protection, and claiming that he has the right to destroy them. He pronounces them just as deserving as himself of exclusion from the favor of God. 'Are these,' he says, 'the people who are to take my place in heaven, and the place of the angels who united with me'? They profess to obey the law of God; but have they kept its precepts? Have they not been lovers of self more than lovers of God? Have they not placed their own interests above His service? Have they not loved the things of the world? Look at the sins that have marked their lives. Behold their selfishness, their malice, their hatred of one another. Will God banish me and my angels from His presence, and yet reward those who have been guilty of the same sins? Thou canst not do this, O Lord, in justice. Justice demands that sentence be pronounced against them."

\textsuperscript{3}\textsuperscript{4}\textsuperscript{5}Ellen White, \textit{The Great Controversy}, 488.
covetousness, emulation, and strife for the highest place.” And in order for this purpose to be accomplished, every “evil agencies act their part through the devising of Satan.”

On the other hand, Ellen White proves with the Scripture that Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary is to counteract Satan’s devices and to finish the work of recreating God’s image in humanity which He began on the Cross. Christ is interceding before His Father for those who took sides with God in the controversy, that they will be protected from the attacks of the evil one. He presents His merits before God, claiming them as being His disciples, and doing for them what nobody and nowhere else in the whole universe can do.

Thus, Christ’s intercessory ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, at the right hand of the Father, has a decisive role in one’s spirituality and his or her eternal destiny. All the goals in the redemption of humankind and all the necessary work in making them spiritual again, find their complete fulfillment in the intercessory ministry of Christ. Ellen White makes the following important statement, “The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was his death upon

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346Ellen White, Testimonies to the Church, 6:38.

347See Ellen White, The Great Controversy, 484. “Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, he lifts his wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying, ‘I know them by name. I have graven them on the palms of my hands. ‘The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise’ (PS 51:17). And to the accuser of his people he declares, ‘The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?’ (Zech 3:2). Christ will clothe his faithful ones with his own righteousness, that he may present them to his Father ‘a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing’ (Eph 5:27). Their names stand enrolled in the book of life, and concerning them it is written, ‘They shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy’” (Rev 3:4).
the cross. By his death he began that work which after his resurrection he ascended to complete in Heaven.”348

How can a person connect to Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary? Ellen White answers, “We must by faith enter within the veil.”349 “Jesus, our Advocate, is inviting us to walk with him. He is pleading the case of the tempted, the erring, and the faithless. He is striving to lift them into companionship with himself. It is his work to sanctify his people, to cleanse, ennoble, and purify them, and fill their hearts with peace. He is thus fitting them for glory, honor, and eternal life; for an inheritance richer and more lasting than that of any earthly prince.”350

The benefits of Christ’s intercessory ministry are incommensurable. Ellen White summarizes them this way, “The sins are removed from the sanctuary,” “a special work of purification, of putting away of sin among God’s people takes place.”351 “All who have put on the robe of Christ’s righteousness will stand before Him as chosen and faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of the Saviour. Not one soul who in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy’s power. . . Angels of God will walk on either side of them, even in this world, and they will stand at last among the angels that surround the throne of God.”352

On the other hand, “Satan invents unnumbered schemes,” Ellen White says, “to

348Ibid., 489.
349Ibid.
occupy our minds that they may not dwell upon the very work with which we ought to be best acquainted. The arch-deceiver hates the great truths that bring to view an atoning sacrifice and an all-powerful Mediator. He knows that with him everything depends on his diverting minds from Jesus and his truth.”\textsuperscript{353} Satan even “redoubles his efforts to defeat the work of Christ in man’s behalf,” she affirms, and to “fasten souls in his snares.” His terrible goal is “to hold the people in darkness and impenitence till the Saviour’s mediation is ended, and there is no longer a sacrifice for sin.”\textsuperscript{354}

When the intercessory ministry of Christ in heaven is finished, she cautions, then “all cases are decided and eternally fixed. It is a fearful, awful time.”\textsuperscript{355} That means that “Christ will come, and His reward will be with Him to give to every man as his work shall be.”\textsuperscript{356} In order to really benefit from Christ’s intercessory ministry so that the end of it will bring the privilege of living with God forever, Ellen White urges using the words of Christ, “Watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is” (Mark13:33).

Watchfulness—The Missing Spiritual Discipline in Connection to the Practice of God’s Presence

A specific contribution which Ellen White brings to the concept of God’s presence is the spiritual habit of watchfulness. Just few days before her death she wrote, “I am guarding every moment,” she said, “so that nothing may come between me and the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{353}Ellen White, \textit{The Great Controversy}, 488.
  \item \textsuperscript{354}Ibid., 88.
  \item \textsuperscript{355}Ellen G. White, \textit{Last Days Events} (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1992), 235.
  \item \textsuperscript{356}Ellen White, \textit{The Faith I Live By}, 213.
\end{itemize}
Lord.” Her determination in life was to be in connection to God always, and her message to the people of her time and to her readers was the same. There is something that the spiritual person has to do in order to remain in the presence of God after his devotional time spent in prayer, study of the Word and worship. And that is watching.

Watchfulness is united with prayer in White’s counsels, just as Jesus put the two together in His teachings and when He asked His disciples to share with Him in His struggle in Gethsemane (Matt 26:41). And often, to watchfulness and prayer is added meditation. “If you will only watch,” she says, “continually watch unto prayer, if you will do everything as if you were in the immediate presence of God, you will be saved from yielding to temptation and may hope to be kept pure, spotless, and undefiled till the last.”

It is clear that Ellen White implies here that the sense of God’s presence can be lost, and as a result of it, anyone may fall into temptation. Therefore her conclusion is so powerful, “As a shield from temptation and an inspiration to purity and truth, no other influence can equal the sense of God’s presence.” It is like in the case of watchmen who pray over a city. After they pray they keep their eyes open. In other words, they act their prayer, they live the prayer out; otherwise their prayer might not make any difference. “Like faithful sentinels, they should guard the citadel of the soul, never

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358 Ellen White, Desire of Ages, 83.
360 Ellen White, Education, 255.
feeling that they may relax their vigilance for a moment."361

Of many examples with which she illustrates her point, David and Joseph appear the most relevant. David did not watch and lost God’s presence falling into terrible sins,362 while Joseph, under similar temptations, remained faithful to God, for the very reason that he kept the sense of God’s presence with him by watchfulness and prayer.363 The applications she makes is evident, “God intended the history of David’s fall to serve as a warning that even those whom He has greatly blessed and favored are not to feel secure and neglect watchfulness and prayer.”364

Ellen White presents watchfulness as a special request from God,365 and as an indispensable need for all.366 She also regards watchfulness as an attitude of dependence upon God.367 Consequently, because humanity’s dependence upon God is to be permanent, so has watchfulness to be. Her expressions are clear; “Constant watchfulness and prayer.”368

How can this be realized? “Your watchfulness,” she argues, “should be

362See Ellen White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 724.
363See Ellen White, Education, 255.
364Ellen White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 724.
365See Ellen White, Review and Herald, August 10, 1862, par. 5.
366Ellen White, The Adventist Home, 159.
People may have a powerful spiritual experience, they might enjoy God's presence profoundly for a while, but that experience does not last by itself, for "through neglect of meditation, watchfulness, and prayer, they lose the blessing." That means that they separate "themselves from Jesus," and thus "they . . . shut away the light of His presence."379

The neglect of watchfulness has also a negative impact in resisting Satan's attacks. By neglecting watchfulness, Satan has access to the soul "through his subtlety," to corrupt the mind, and "lead into inconsistencies and gross darkness;"380 to "self-sufficiency and spiritual pride,"381 and to "discourage and overcome . . . if possible."382 "But by watchfulness and prayer and faith in Christ," she says, "you may be victorious."383

Thus, it is proved in the writings of Ellen G. White that watchfulness is a practice that is indispensable for the spiritual life. To enjoy a permanent relationship with God, to maintain a sense of His presence, and to be victorious in the battle with Satan and his temptations, all people need to watch, "continually watch unto prayer."

Summary

In this chapter, the biblical and theological foundations for spirituality have been laid. The first section dealt with the meaning and nature of spirituality, and a definition

379Ellen White, Desire of Ages, 83.
380Ellen White, Gospel Workers, 92, 205.
381Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, October 11, 1881, par. 1.
382Ellen White, Desire of Ages, 120-121.
383Ibid.
was suggested as a working definition for the rest of the project. Spirituality is seen as a restored relationship with God that necessitates faith in Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross, takes place under the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in human hearts, and is developed through a process of formation by the practice of spiritual disciplines.

The concept of God’s presence was developed in section two as indispensable for spirituality. It was shown that God has never intended that people live alone. God’s presence in the life of all was God’s initial plan in creation, and has never been changed since then. Through Christ, and the Holy Spirit, throughout the Plan of Salvation, and in the new domain of grace called the kingdom of heaven, God continued to be present in the life of fallen humanity, working to restore the relationship with him, and thus to create a new spirituality. Through Christ, God the Father came to be “God with us,” and through the Holy Spirit, He makes an even further step, coming down to live in the very heart of the spiritual human being, and thus developing a relationship that is meant to be everlasting. This theme was the subject of section three in which the process was called the restoration of God’s image in humankind.

Restoring God’s image in humanity means restoring a perfect character with which Adam and Eve were created with in the beginning. It also means that state of holiness and purity with its unlimited potential for a holy and lasting relationship with God and with each other. The process of restoring God’s image in humanity made necessary the death of Christ and the unmediated presence and work of the Holy Spirit. It was possible only within a New Covenant. True spirituality involves restoration of God’s character in humankind. This in turn involves holiness and obedience to the will and the
Law of God. God’s call to holiness and obedience to His holy Law, and the miracle of performing this, within the New Covenant, was the subject of section four.

Spirituality as it was reflected in Christ’s ministry was the subject of section five of this chapter. Christ’s spirituality with its seven vast dimensions was presented as the model of spirituality for the rest of the project. The human quest for spirituality, the characteristics of the spiritual human being, the spiritual formation as the path to spirituality, and the spiritual disciplines as God’s means for the spiritual life, were all the subject of section six. Section six brings the concept of spirituality to the practical ground and outlines the content of the spiritual formation program that will be applied in the church setting.

The last section was dedicated to Ellen White’s unique contribution to the topic of spirituality. Of her specific contributions selected was the concept of Christ’s intercessory ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, and watchfulness as a spiritual habit in connection to the practice of God’s presence. Both concepts are seen as indispensable for understanding and experiencing true spirituality, and as a result of this, watchfulness is suggested as a spiritual discipline for the spiritual life, and will be applied as such in the spiritual formation program designed for the church.

Thus, spirituality with its central relational concept, its main components, and its biblical roots has been presented in this chapter. The perfect model of spirituality that finds its culminating expression in the ministry of Christ waits for application and imitation at the local church level. However, before this application takes place it would be necessary to review how Christ’s spirituality was reflected down the ages in the history of the Christian church.
CHAPTER 3

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON SPIRITUALITY

Introduction

Christ's spirituality was reflected first, in the life of his disciples, and then, in the life of those men and women of God who were attracted to Jesus and committed to following His example. "The history of the Christian church has been marked by movements" of spirituality, "a word used to describe how God's Spirit has moved upon individuals and groups of people" in a particular period of history "with a particular mission." These movements accentuated the same dimensions of spirituality that emerged from the life of Christ, bringing a revival in the life of the Church. "When one effort has waned, a new movement stressing another area has emerged."

Regarding the number of the spiritual movements, writers hold varied views based upon their particular understanding of Christ's ministry. Gillespie, for example, identifies five dimensions of Christ's spirituality: personal devotion to God, compassion toward all people, evangelism toward the lost, virtue in thoughts, words, and actions, and Spirit empowerment in His ministry. Based upon these five dimensions, he traces five

1Smith and Graybeal, 27.
2Gillespie, Catching God's Grace, 27.
3Smith and Graybeal, 27.
4Ibid.
movements of spirituality in the history of the Christian Church. They are the contemplative movement, social justice movement, evangelical movement, charismatic movement, and holiness movement.⁵

Foster, on the other hand, categorizes six areas in Christ’s spirituality. They are: contemplative movement, social justice movement, evangelical movement, charismatic movement, holiness movement, and incarnational movement or sacramental life.⁶ But as noticed in the previous chapter, a closer look at the Bible uncovers another area of Christ’s spirituality, the area of love—love to God and to all people. This characteristic of Christ’s spirituality is best reflected in the life of His disciples, the first movement in the Christian history, known as the apostolic movement. While all the authors refer to love as being part of Christ’s spirituality, none of them mentions love as a separate dimension. Consequently, while they illustrate different aspects of spirituality by using examples from the apostolic church, they do not present the apostolic church as a separate movement of spirituality.

It should be observed, however, that the first Christian church, under the spiritual leadership of the apostles, started the Christian era as a movement of spirituality. Therefore, in this paper seven movements of spirituality will be surveyed with a twofold purpose: first, to illustrate how Christ’s spirituality was reflected in them and through them, and second, to demonstrate that Christ’s spirituality can be experienced, and has been irrespective of the time of history or the circumstances.


The Apostolic Movement—Love to God and to All People

The apostolic movement was started by Christ Himself by calling and training the twelve disciples. After the Cross, the Resurrection, the ten days of prayer, the disciples’ repentance and recommitment to God, and after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the disciples, along with another group of believers “numbering about a hundred and twenty” (Acts 1:16) became Christianity’s first spiritual movement. This author believes they could be called the movement of love. What began in the prayer of Christ for them that “they may be one” just as the Father and the Son are (John 17:11), culminated in His expressed command, “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34).

The capstone in His giving them His own example of perfect, infinite, self-sacrificing love, and His gift of the Holy Spirit, produced the same love in their lives just as it was manifested in the life of Jesus. Love to God and love to each other was the greatest sign and most evident argument that Jesus was sent by God to redeem the world, and that the disciples were His representatives on earth (John 13:35; 14:15; 17:23).

According to the Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, love was not only “a dominant theme in the early church” but also the “evidence to the world that they were truly the disciples of Christ.”7 The early Christians not only professed the love of Christ but also possessed it. This love was manifested in their characters, relationships, and actions. It was so evident that the pagan world was compelled to exclaim, “See how these Christians love one another . . . and how they are ready to die for one another.”8 The Gentiles

7Hoehner, 659.
around them were completely amazed. “They had never before seen such love in
action.”

Because they practiced Christ’s presence, they were characterized by love like
their Master. “After the Savior’s ascension, the sense of the divine presence, full of love
and light, was still with them. It was a personal presence.” Ellen White emphasizes their
relationship with Christ in this way, “Every Christian saw in his brother a revelation of
divine love and benevolence. . . . The ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness
of Christ’s character and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom.”

Love in the life of the apostolic church was expressed in all human
relationships. One does not need to search too deep in these writings to realize that the
predominant theme in the epistles is the theme of love. In their writings the presentation
of love becomes a holy hymn, reaching, perhaps the most beautiful and complete
description in human literature (see 1 Cor 13). In their proclamation the love of God is
their main theme (John 3:16; 1 John 3:1).

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8Michael J. Wilkins, “Tertullian,” Following the Master (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan
Publishing), quoted in Philip G. Samaan, Christ’s Way of Making Disciples (Hagerstown, MD: Review
And Herald, 1999, 36.

9Samaan, Christ’s Way of Making Disciples, 36.

10Ibid., 116.


12Ibid., 48.

13It was love for one’s fellow believer (Gal 6:10), love for family (Eph 5:25-33), and love for
enemies (Matt 5:43-48). In their epistles the apostles reiterated that rather than seeking revenge believers
are to love those who hate and persecute them (Rom 12:14; 17-21; 1 Thess 5:15; 1 Pet 3:9).

14See Rom 13:8-9; Gal 5:13-14; Eph 1:15; 4:2; 5:2; Col 1:4; 1 Cor 13; 1 Cor 16:24; 2 Cor 2:24;
11:11; 1 Thess 4:9; 5:13; 2 Thess 1:3; Tit 2:4; Heb 6:10; 10:24; 13:1; Jas 2:8; 1 Pet 1:8; 3:1-6; 1 John 3:23;
1 John 4:10-11, 19; 4:20-21; 5:2; etc.
Although this dimension of love appears as the major characteristic of the apostolic movement, love was not the only distinguishing dimension. Indeed, the apostolic movement was characterized by having all seven characteristics of Christ’s spirituality. None were missing. However the presence of the Holy Spirit in their spiritual experience should be noticed as a special mark. Scripture sums their lives up succinctly, “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4).

The fruit if the Spirit is love (Gal 5:22). A careful study of this movement demonstrates that the early Christian spirituality was rooted in the love of the Spirit and this love motivated all their devotional life with its spiritual practices. The love of the Spirit is foundational for all other dimensions of spirituality. The book of Acts and the epistles testify about this. It was out of love that “they all joined together constantly in prayer” (Acts 1:14). Out of love they were studying the Word (Acts 9:20; 13:5). Out of love for their Savior and for each other they also got together for the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:20). Out of love they were worshiping God and having fellowship with each other by using psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph 5:19). The description of the early church in Acts 2:42-47\(^{15}\) gives a basic outline of God’s intention for church, a picture of what the apostolic movement was about, and also delineates the basic practices of church life.\(^{16}\)

\(^{15}\) "They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Filled with love for God and for people, they preached the message of the Gospel to the lost, winning thousands for God (Acts 2:41). And they did not do that only in Jerusalem or in Samaria, but also “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). According to Paul, they proclaimed the Gospel “to every creature under heaven” (Col 1:23). It was this divine love that caused the early Church to grow so rapidly.\(^{17}\) It was “love in action,” as Carlos Martin puts it, “coupled with the verbal presentation of God’s love” that made the apostolic church so unique.\(^{18}\)

“No wonder much of the known world came to Christ in the early centuries. They could see how believers loved one another in true fellowship.”\(^{19}\)

The early church mirrored their Master’s compassion as well. “Koinonia\(^{20}\) was one of the church’s hallmarks: its members jointly participated in the life of Christ in their midst. The church was a loving caring community.”\(^{21}\) Love and compassion toward all people were manifested in healing the sick and driving out demons (Act 5:12-16), in “doing good and helping the poor” (Acts 9:36).

\(^{17}\)Ibid., 82.


\(^{19}\)Colson, 124.

\(^{20}\)See Charles Colson with Ellen Santilli Vaughn, 123. “The word for fellowship in the New Testament Greek, *koinonia*, means a communion, a participation of people together in God’s grace. It describes a new community in which individuals willingly covenant to share in common, to be in submission to each other, to support one another and bear one another’s burdens,” as Paul wrote to Galatians, and to build each other up in relationship with the Lord. In Scripture this *koinonia* embraces both the vertical and the horizontal. . . . It was a concept the early believers understood because it paralleled the Old Testament concept of God’s people sharing together in the covenant community in which He Himself chose to live.”

The dimension of holiness in the apostolic church manifested in thoughts, words, and actions was intrinsically related to love as well. Leighton Ford observes that “the followers of Jesus showed His love and holiness in their personal lives.”\textsuperscript{22} “The heart of holiness” says J. I. Packer “is the spirit of love.” Following Jesus in His love, in the spirit of “self-giving, is holiness manifested in its purest and most perfect expression.”\textsuperscript{23} That implies obedience, which in order to be perfect and accepted, has to be motivated by love also. That was the case with the apostolic movement.

And finally, their lives were the materialization of their faith in Christ. The first-century Christians expressed their faith and love in the routines of every-day life.\textsuperscript{24} They brought their faith in their daily routines, uniting the physical and the spiritual together. What is written about them testifies in the favor of this truth perfectly. “All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. . . . They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people” (Acts 2:44-47).

The conclusion is evident; “Nearly two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ began a movement that was to spread to the ends of the earth.”\textsuperscript{25} It was a movement of spirituality.


\textsuperscript{23}J. I. Packer, \textit{Keep in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk with God} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 94.

\textsuperscript{24}Arn and Arn, 25.

\textsuperscript{25}Leroy Eims, \textit{The Lost Art of Disciple Making} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 37.
that was designed to reach the world with the Good News of God's love. As a movement of love they manifested through character and actions that "the religion of Christ is love." Thus, the apostolic church, saturated by Christ's love, practiced all six areas of Christ's spirituality. Their whole life was made as John Wesley puts it, "a labor of love." And as their Lord demonstrated His love for God and for the world by His supreme sacrifice, dying on the Cross, so did His apostles.

Of all other movements of spirituality, the apostolic movement reproduced Christ's spirituality most perfectly. They leave for the rest of the history of the Christian church the greatest testimony that Christ's spirituality can be fully experienced by feeble human beings who surrender their lives to the indwelling presence of the Spirit of love and practice a devotional life that keeps them in constant relationship with their Savior.

The Contemplative Movement—Devotion to God

The contemplative movement traces its origin to the fourth century. According to Foster, the major trait of the contemplative movement was "the human longing for the practice of the presence of God." The social and religious context of the fourth century provided the backdrop for the rise of this movement. After the edict of Constantine in

26Ibid.

27Ellen G. White, "You Are the Light of the World," The Home Missionary, July 1, 1897 par. 22.


29See McDowell, 61. "Peter—crucified; Andrew—crucified; Matthew—the sword; John—natural; James, son of Alphaeus—crucified; Philip—crucified; Simon—crucified; Thaddaeus—killed by arrows; James, brother of Jesus—stoned; Thomas—spear thrust; Bartholomew—crucified; James, son of Zebedee—the sword."

30Foster, Streams of Living Water, 25.
A.D. 313 that put an end to the continuing series of persecution against Christians, the church witnessed waves of conversions to Christianity. James Rutz observes that by the end of the fourth century, just eighty-seven years after the edict of Constantine, “the Roman Empire had gone from being less than four per cent Christian to eighty per cent Christian.” Unfortunately this appears to have happened without genuine conversions and coupled with other changes in the life and the structure of the church, the spirituality of the church was lost.

The rise of the contemplative movement is perceived as a reaction to the apostasies brought in by the merging of church and state. Sincere Christians—“men and women—fled city life to find cloisters and monasteries” in order to survive spiritually and to seek an authentic relationship with God. They did this by emphasizing the importance of solitude, meditation, and prayer.

Anthony of the Egyptian desert (A.D. 251-356), is by far the most prominent representative of the contemplative movement, and recognized as “the founder of the Desert Fathers.” Antonius followed the Scriptures literally, declares Foster. “After making provision for his sister, he sold off his parent’s estate,” who were dead at that time, “gave the money to the poor” and “went out into the Egyptian desert, seeking

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32 Ibid.
33 Smith and Graybeal, 27.
34 Ibid.
35 Foster, Streams of Living Water, 31.
There he spent twenty years in solitude seeking God with “a single-hearted devotion toward the goal of Christlikeness.” It is said that “he renounced possessions in order to learn detachment; he renounced speech in order to learn compassion; he renounced activity in order to learn prayer.” This time, continues Foster, was a time of “character formation” that produced “stability of character,” “purity of soul,” “a cheerful face,” and a conduct that made many to aspire to copy his life.

Several characteristics of this movement have been identified. First, it is clear that the Holy Spirit is present in this movement. Second, according to Leech, it was the quest for “purity of heart, of freedom from passion and disturbance, and the acquiring of unified vision and purpose.” Third, spiritual disciplines were central in the quest for spirituality. The main disciplines of this movement were silence, solitude, and meditation, along with prayer, fasting, and Scripture study.

Fourth, the development of the monastic movement established a lasting foundation for the concept of spiritual direction. Among the people of the desert, prominent figures were distinguished as “spiritual fathers.” Those spiritual figures were regarded as holy, and were considered more than tutors. They were called abba, and were

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37Ibid., 29.
38Leech, 133.
39Ibid., 138.
40Morris, 45.
great spiritual men like Antonius who returned to the world to minister to its needs.\textsuperscript{45} It appears that after years of desert isolation, their spirituality and disciplines were taken to extremes and in some respects developed strange elements not endorsed by the Word of God.\textsuperscript{46} Monasticism that grew out of the desert movement “retained the signs of its wilderness origin,”\textsuperscript{47} and illustrates very well the dangers of this movement.

Therefore care should be exercised in approaching spirituality solely by the door of the contemplative movement. For to live as an ascetic, to deny the natural needs of a normal and balanced life, to ignore the world and its desperate needs for the Gospel and authentic examples of spiritual life, is to reject God’s initial plan and purpose that Christians are to be the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world” (Matt 5:13-14).

Contemplative’s detachment from the world went in many cases beyond that suggested by the Word of God. It was not like that of John the Baptist, or of the Old Testament prophets, or that of Jesus Christ. Christ prayed that His disciples—would not

\textsuperscript{45}See Foster, \textit{Streams of Living Water}, 29. “After his twenty years in the desert, contrary to many others who lived a life of desert with little or no interest or connection to the real world, Antonius returned to the society of his days, and started a notable ministry, proclaiming the Gospel ‘among both society’s elite and its rejects—teaching, counseling, healing, expelling demons, and more’”

\textsuperscript{46}See John A. McGuckin, “The Early Church Fathers,” in \textit{The Story of Christian Spirituality: Two Thousand Years from East to West}, ed. Gordon Mursell (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 58, 60. “The manner in which the martyr was thought to have powers of intercession was replaced by the conception of ascetical monks as holy intermediaries with God, people who could heal the hurts of the heart and soul and pray for the forgiveness of sins for ordinary Christians. . . . They demanded a strict abstinence from sexuality and marriage and possession of worldly resources. The renunciation of the world was elevated as a central principle of the ascetical movement, and this spirituality of renunciation or asceticism became a dominant aspect of Christianity from the fourth century to the present, coming to mark all manner of Christian attitudes to ethics and politics and spiritual reflection.”

\textsuperscript{47}Leech, 133; see also Leech, 142. “From Antony’s original movement there grew a variety of forms of monastic life. Egypt was the center of the movement. In Lower Egypt were the hermits, while the organized monastic movement of Pachomius (290-347) developed in Tabennisi in Upper Egypt. At Nitria and Scetis there grew up another form of monastic life in which several monks lived together as disciples with a spiritual father (pneumatikos pater). Mount Sinai itself began to attract solitaries during the persecutions of the third century, and the first monastery was built there in the fourth century.”
The example of Franck Laubach may represent the most outstanding contemporary replica of the contemplative movement. Laubach (1884-1970), identified by Foster as "a man of prayer and a man of action," was with degrees earned from prestigious universities and served as missionary in the Philippines. 49 He was one of the most traveled Christians of all ages, perhaps the most traveled man of modern times with endless accomplishments. 50

Foster tells how "his burning passion for literacy took him to every continent of the globe, where he worked both within and outside Christian settings." 51 In spite of all these, he had time and passion to say, "Oh, this thing of keeping in constant touch with God, of making Him the object of my thought and the companion of my conversations, is the most amazing thing I ever ran across." 52 "It is working . . .," he exclaimed, "now I like the Lord's presence so much that when for a half hour or so He slips out of mind . . . I feel as though I had deserted Him, and as though I had lost something very precious in my life." 53

Out of countless spiritual elements that could be mentioned, three are considered

49Foster, 41.

50 See Gene Edwards, xiii-xiv. "He was known in virtually every land on earth. Countless honors were bestowed on him, though when once presented with a famous 'Man of the Year' award he said humbly, 'The Lord will not wish to count my trophies, but my scars.' He wrote over-fifty books, several of them best sellers that had a world-wide influence. He was perhaps the greatest single educator of modern times. He has been referred to by many people as one of the most unique figures of twentieth century. The accomplishments of his life are virtually endless."

51 See Foster, Streams of Living Water, 48. "He met with kings, prime ministers, presidents, generals, and colonial administrators from Lebanon to Malaya. He developed literacy in Afghanistan, Nepal, Dutch New Guinea, and nearly one hundred countries."


53 Ibid.
decisive. First was Laubach’s encounter with God in prayer and deep meditation when he was forty four. Then, his prayer was, “Drive me out of myself and take possession of me and think Thy thoughts in my mind.”

Second, the use of spiritual disciplines. And third was his determination to give God every minute of his life. Through this he meant to be in contact with God by keeping Him in his mind every minute of his waking hours, and by learning from Jesus. He describes this experience:

This concentration upon God is strenuous, but everything else has ceased to be so. I think more clearly, I forget less frequently. Things which I did with a strain before, I now do easily and with no effort whatever. I worry about nothing, and lose no sleep. I walk on air a good part of the time. Even the mirror reveals a new light in my eyes and face. I no longer feel in a hurry about anything. Everything goes right. Each minute I meet calmly as though it were not important. Nothing can go wrong excepting one thing. That is that God may slip from my mind if I do not keep on my guard. If He is there, the universe is with me. My task is simple and clear.

The contribution of Frank Laubach to spirituality is enormous. He demonstrated that the practice of God’s presence is the essence of spirituality. He left a priceless journal of his experiment of a constant walk with God. And he also left for posterity practical lessons as to how to practice God’s presence on a daily basis.

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54 Foster, *Streams of Living Water*, 43.

55 Laubach, 5.

56 Gene Edwards, 15-16.

57 In January, 29, 1930 Frank Laubach wrote: “I feel simply carried along each hour, doing my part in a plan which is far beyond myself. This sense of cooperation with God in little things is what so astonishes me, for I never have felt it this way before. I need something, and turn round to find it waiting for me. I must work, to be sure, but there is God working along with me. God takes care of all the rest. My part is to live this hour in continuous inner conversation with God and in perfect responsiveness to his will, to make this hour gloriously rich. This seems to be all I need think about (see page 10). “I choose to make the rest of my life an experiment in answering this question.” Ibid., 4.

58 First Lauback considers it a matter of forming a new habit. “You will find this just as easy and just as hard as forming any other habit.” Second, in the beginning, “select a favorable hour, an easy,
Thus, Frank Laubach, represents a contemplative spirituality that does not need monastery walls or years of solitude in the desert in order to find and serve God. He found God in the Bible every day and he tried to think of God, to communicate with Him uncomplicated hour. See how many minutes of the hour you can remember to touch Christ at least once each minute; that is to say, bring Him to mind at least one second out of every sixty. You will not do so well at first but keep trying, for it constantly becomes easier, and after a while is almost automatic.” Third, when in a group of friends, “suppose you have enjoyed a good time in the presence of the Lord, and then you find yourself with a group of friends engaged in ordinary conversation. Can you recall the Lord at least once every minute? This is hard, but here are some helps. Keep humming to yourself (inaudibly) a favorite hymn—for example, “Have Thine Own Way, Lord, Have Thine Own Way.” Keep whispering inside, ‘Lord, You are my life,’ or ‘You are my thought.” Fourth, “When at the table remember Jesus words, ‘Eat this is remembrance of me.’ This can be applied to ordinary meals so that every mouthful is His ‘body broken for you.’” Fifth, “When reading, keep a running conversation with Him about the pages you are reading. If you lean back to consider some problem, how can you remember the Lord? By forming a new habit! All thought employs silent words and is really conversation with your inner self. Instead of talking to yourself, form the habit of talking to Christ.” Sixth, “When evil thoughts of any kind come, say, ‘Lord, these thoughts are not fit to discuss with you. Lord, you do the thinking. Renew my mind by your presence.” Seventh, “When you are strolling out of doors alone you can recall the Lord at least once every minute with no effort. If you wander to a place where you can talk aloud without being overheard, you may speak to the invisible Companion inside you. Ask Him what is most on His heart and then answer back aloud with your voice what you believe God replies to you. Of course, we are not always sure whether we have guessed His answer correctly, but it is surprising how much of the time we are very certain. It really is not necessary to be sure that our answer is right, for the answer is not the great thing—He is! God is infinitely more important than His advice or His gifts; indeed, He, Himself, is the great gift. The most precious privilege in talking with Christ is this intimacy which we can have with Him. We may have a glorious succession of heavenly minutes. How foolish we are to lose life’s most poignant joy, seeing it may be had while taking a walk alone! But the most wonderful discovery of all is, to use the words of Paul, ‘Christ liveth in me.’ He dwells in us, walks in our minds, reaches out through our hands, speaks with our voices, if we respond to His every whisper.” Eighth, “Make sure, that your last thoughts are of Christ as you are falling asleep at night. Continue to whisper any words of endearment your heart suggests. If all day long you have been walking with Him, you will find Him the dear companion of your dreams. Sometimes after such a day, we have fallen asleep with our pillows wet from tears of joy, feeling His tender touch on our foreheads. Usually, you will feel no deep emotion, but will always have a ‘peace that passeth all understanding.’ This is the end of a perfect day.” Ninth, “On waking in the morning, you may ask, ‘Now, Lord, shall we get up’? Some of us whisper to Him our every thought about washing and dressing in the morning.” Tenth, “Men have found they can keep the Lord in mind while engaged in all types of work, mental or manual, and find that they are happier and get better results. Those who endure the most intolerable ordeals gain new strength when they realize that their Unseen Comrade is by their side. (To be sure, no man whose business is harmful or whose methods are dishonest, can expect God’s partnership.) The carpenter can do better work if he talks quietly to God about each task, as Jesus surely did when He was a carpenter.” Eleventh, “There are women who cultivate Christ’s companionship while cooking, washing dishes, sweeping, sewing, and caring for children. Aids which they find helpful are: whisper to the Lord about each small matter, knowing that He loves to help. Hum or sing a favorite hymn.” Twelfth, “Students can enjoy the presence of the Lord even when taking an examination. Say, ‘Father, keep my mind clear, and help me remember all I have learned. How shall we answer this next question?’ He will not tell you what you have never studied, but He does sharpen your memory and take away your stage fright when you ask Him.” His conclusion is, “Troubles and pain come to those who practice God’s presence, as they came to Jesus, but these seem not so important as compared to their new joyous experience. If we have spent our days with Him, we find that when earthquakes, fires, famines, or other catastrophes threaten us,
and keep Him in his mind every minute of every waking hour. Even though he is considered as a great representative in the line of the contemplative movement, his spirituality seems more similar to that of the first Christians who integrated Christ’s spirituality in their lives completely.

The Social Justice Movement—Compassion Toward All People

God cares deeply about how people treat each other. The Christian life is not a set of beliefs and doctrines about truth, but it is about practicing the truth in relation to the needs of others. The social justice movement brings this dimension of spirituality to the center of Christian life, emphasizing that the responsibility and mandate of the spiritual human being is to love his neighbor. Therefore, Foster defines the social justice movement as “a life committed to compassion and justice for all peoples.”

The social justice movement was started by Francis of Assisi in the late twelfth century. After young Francis of Assisi had lived a sinful life, he experienced an unusual conversion where He had a vision of the crucified Christ and felt called to a special mission which radically changed the course of his life. He gave up the wealth of his father and instead started a spiritual life that led him to “care for the lepers and the destitute.” Francis’ life and ministry “were marked by poverty and simplicity, and a particular closeness to the natural world.” He also preached the message of the Gospel to

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59Smith and Graybeal, 53.
60Ibid., 54
61Foster, Streams of Living Water, 182.
the people of his time, with an emphasis on “repentance, peace, and salvation.”

His desire was to “imitate Christ by living a life of poverty, chastity, and obedience.” The ministry he began for lepers and the ill, continued until his death in 1226 marking him as the most beloved of saints of the Middle Ages. His influence upon others was so powerful that “a group of followers abandoned their former lives and went about the Italian countryside, caring for the sick, the poor and the lame.” Even after the death of Francis, followers formed the Franciscan and Port Clare orders.

The example of Francis of Assisi and his followers in meeting the needs of the sick, and the poor is not singular. The history of Christian church is replete with examples of compassion for the sick and needy, including John Woolman, who advocated against slavery, the Salvation Army, an organization that began a ministry

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64 Ibid., 314.

65 Ibid.

66 Foster, Streams of Living Water, 314.

67 See Stephen R. Graham, “The Protestant Tradition in America,” in The Story of Christian Spirituality: Two Thousand Years from East to West, ed. Gordon Mursell (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 282-283. See also John Woolman, “The Journal of John Woolman,” http://tntn.essortment.com/johnwoolmanbio_rwfy.htm (November 18, 2007). John Woolman (1720-72) was a remarkable advocate for justice for African-Americans and Native Americans. “Woolman believed all men, regardless of color or position, are equal in the eyes of God and should be equal in the eyes of man. He also believed no man should support a cause he felt wrong.” Putting aside the keeping of slaves for any reason was always on Woolman’s mind. He wrote three major essays and a journal. The essays are entitled: “Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes,” “Considerations on Keeping Negroes: Part Second,” and “A Plea for the Poor.” His journal is simply, “The Journal of John Woolman.” It is also written about him, “John Woolman, Quaker, lover of mankind, forgotten by those he rose up so vehemently to protect and fight for, will live on. His work inspired many and found its way into many hands. . . . Some of the civil disobedience actions taking place daily across this land would never have been if it had not been for John Woolman the gentle Quaker. One fact that is clear is Woolman opened the door for today’s civil rights
for the poor and needy;68 Mother Teresa, who offered her life for the destitute and dying people in India;69 and ADRA, the humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that works in more than ninety countries around the world.70 This indicates that there is a connection between the Holy Spirit and the social justice movement.

movement. This humble man lived, breathed, and shared the love of God and the love for all mankind, red, yellow, white or black...”

68 The Salvation Army is an integral part of the Christian Church, although distinctive in government and practice. The Army’s doctrine follows the mainstream of Christian belief and its articles of faith emphasize God’s saving purposes. Its objects are “the advancement of the Christian religion . . . of education, the relief of poverty, and other charitable objects beneficial to society or the community of mankind as a whole. The movement, founded in 1865 by William Booth, has spread from London, England, to many parts of the world. All Salvationists accept a disciplined and compassionate life of high moral standards which includes abstinence from alcohol and tobacco. Raised to evangelize, the Army spontaneously embarked on schemes for the social betterment of the poor.” “The Salvation Army,” http://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/www_sa.nsf/vw-dynamic- (November 19, 2007).

69 Mother Teresa (Albanian: Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, August 26, 1910-September 5, 1997) was an Albanian Roman Catholic nun who founded the Missionaries of Charity and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for her humanitarian work. For over forty years she ministered to the poor, sick, orphaned, and dying in Kolkata (Calcutta), India. As the Missionaries of Charity grew under Mother Teresa’s leadership, they expanded their ministry to other countries. By the 1970s she had become internationally famed as a humanitarian and advocate for the poor and helpless.” Here are some of her outstanding actions: “In 1950 Mother Teresa started “the diocesan congregation that would become the Missionaries of Charity; in 1952 Mother Teresa opened the first Home for the Dying in space made available by the City of Calcutta; Mother Teresa soon opened a home for those suffering from Hansens disease, commonly known as leprosy, and called the hospice Shanti Nagar (City of Peace). . . . The order soon began to attract both recruits and charitable donations, and by the 1960s had opened hospices, orphanages, and leper houses all over India. Mother Teresa then expanded the order throughout the globe. Its first house outside India opened in Venezuela in 1965 with five sisters. Others followed in Rome, Tanzania, and Austria in 1968; during the 1970s the order opened houses and foundations in dozens of countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the United States.” Mother Teresa, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_Teresa (November 18, 2007).

70 See Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, 1996 ed., “Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA).” ADRA, “an agency established in 1983 after the reorganization of Seventh-day Adventist World Service, Incorporated (SAWS). As the humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church ADRA works in more than 90 countries around the world. The values that have shaped the agency are the traditional Christian values of the potential of each individual to reflect the image of God, the dignity that is inherent in every person, and the importance of quality in human life. ADRA approaches humanity as an integrated entity comprised of physical, mental, social, and moral facets. ADRA works on behalf of the poor. It regards them with respect, as partners with whom it works in a learning and sharing relationship. . . . Independent ADRA has offices in nearly 100 countries providing the agency with a network that reaches the world. ADRA’s programs include agricultural training, mother/child health care, commodity-supported development, small enterprise development, water resources, and disaster relief. . . . ADRA also aids in the distribution of food to undernourished schoolchildren. . . . Whenever possible, ADRA carries out long-term rehabilitation in disaster situations.
The Spirit of compassion is the Spirit of Christ. It was under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit that Jesus declared His mission as a mission of compassion and justice for “the poor,” “the prisoners,” “the blind,” and “the oppressed” (Luke 4:18-19). Wherever the spirit of true compassion and justice is present, there the Spirit of the Lord is present as well. And wherever that spirit is manifested toward the poor and needy, regardless of their race, color, or religious type, there Christ’s compassion with its unselfish acts is repeated.

The great lesson of the social justice movement is the lesson of love and faith that work together for the good of the least. It is a living demonstration of spirituality that goes beyond the theory of religion, and manifests by acts of care and compassion for all people regardless of nationality, social class, race or gender.71 The social movement proves that it is possible to live for the poor, the sick and for the destitute, even though it involves a spirit of sacrifice that is similar to that of Christ. Obviously, the main spiritual disciplines of this movement were sacrifice, submission, service, chastity, simplicity and frugality.

The social justice movement also has dangers. “Perhaps the greatest danger,” affirms Foster, “is the tendency . . . to become an end in itself.” If this tendency is followed, it leads to “legalism,” another danger of this movement.72 When this happens, the purpose of life—to glorify God, is not fulfilled, and the actions or the projects however good or great might be, cease to remain spiritual.

Another danger would be “to become too closely identified with any particular

71 Foster, Streams of Living Water, 176.
72 Ibid., 179.
The only attachment of any activity performed for the benefit of humanity should be to God. The life of service for others should be considered a great privilege and a great responsibility, for life is meant to be a life of compassion for all people and always in the name of Christ and for His own sake.

**The Evangelical Movement—Proclamation of the Gospel**

The most important spiritual movement since the apostle’s time was the evangelical movement of the sixteenth century. The evangelical movement came about as a result of (1) God’s longing to reveal Himself to a humanity that was disconnected from Him by sin, misconceptions, and legalism, and (2) the human longing after a true revelation of God and His salvation. When the two were blended together in the heart of Martin Luther, the Protestant Reformation was born. Known as among the thirstiest one of that time, Martin Luther was also the most influential person. As a monk, Luther tried all the Catholic means for spirituality and salvation—but nothing worked for his soul. When Luther discovered that a person can have direct entrance to God and be justified by faith, it made all the difference, both in the life of Luther and in the destiny of Christian

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73 Ibid., 180.


75 Along with Martin Luther, God had other representatives of this great movement.

76 Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, 123.

church. The first two immediate effects of Luther’s discoveries were the preaching of the Word and the translation of that Word into a language understood by all.

The four foundational elements of spirituality in the evangelical movement are: *sola scriptura, sola Christus, sola gratia, and sola fide.* Once Scripture alone was recognized as the only source of authority in spiritual matters, the Word became the ground for the other three elements as well as providing the boundaries for spirituality. Consequently a new spirituality emerged based upon a personal relationship with the God of Scripture, and by faith in Christ alone. This new spirituality was directly connected to the experience of salvation that came first, and involved authentic conversion. Salvation included the new discovery of justification by faith, and faith alone. It was evident, concludes Selderhuis, “that this ‘new’ doctrine had fundamental consequences for spirituality.”

The priesthood of all believers was another important element of the evangelical movement. This biblical concept made two remarkable changes in the spiritual life of people. First, they had direct access to God through Christ alone. Thus the most important component in spirituality—the personal relationship with God—was no longer

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78 McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 86.

79 Ibid.

80 Grenz, 23. “The emphases on the authority of the Bible, and the sole salvific work of Christ, leading to salvation by grace, through faith alone have characterized evangelicals wherever they have been found since the sixteenth century.”

81 Foster, *Streams of Living Water*, 225.

82 Selderhuis, 168.

mediated by other human beings, whether by priest, dead saints, indulgences or other meritorious deeds. Second, ministry is to open the Word of God resulting in a personal encounter with the God of Scripture.84 "For Luther, the Word was the means in order to encounter "the divine Presence," therefore he encouraged people to be "diligent in their reading and contemplation of Scripture"85 and to live in the world so as to "bear witness."86

Thus, to summarize, the evangelical movement "is comprised of three great themes: first, and foremost, the faithful proclamation of the gospel; second, the centrality of Scripture as a faithful repository of the gospel; and third, the confessional witness of the early Christian community as a faithful interpretation of the gospel."87 The main spiritual disciplines for the formation of the spiritual life that characterize this movement were the study of the Word, prayer, and preaching the Word.

Although Luther was a theologian he had deep pastoral concern for the spirituality of his followers.88 To help church members develop a practical spiritual life, Luther wrote his Small Catechism, which was a simple manual of instructions for the Christian faith. His manual taught that spirituality starts in the family, in a Christian environment, where daily prayer in the morning and evening, along with grace at meal, a 'Table of Duties' made up of scriptural passages selected for various states and conditions, and

84Smith and Graybeal, 62.
86McGrath, Christian Spirituality, 23.
87Foster, Streams of Living Water, 219.
88McGrath, Christian Spirituality, 158.
participation at the Lord's Supper were the main avenues to spirituality. Luther gave instructions for a life of devotion that is mainly structured on a fourfold interaction with the biblical text, and that involves instruction, thanksgiving, confession, and prayer. McGrath affirms that this framework "was widely adopted in within Lutheran circles and beyond." 

The effects of the evangelical movement upon spirituality are seen up to the present time. All the Protestant churches that came out of the Protestant Reformation are a continuation of the movement began by Luther. Two other spiritual movements, Puritanism and Pietism were born of the evangelical movement, and are recognized for their attempts to bring spiritual revival within the evangelical movements. America was profoundly blessed by the evangelical movement too.

But no other movement in the history of Christian church has had a greater impact upon Christianity than the evangelical movement. The representatives of this movement teach posterity, the valuable lesson, that it is possible to come out of the deepest spiritual


90McGrath, *Christian Spirituality*, 87.

91 Ibid.

92See Grenz, 22. "The churches that emerged from the German Reformation adopted the name evangelical as a means of highlighting Luther's emphasis on the Gospel. . . . By virtue of this historical connection, all Protestants churches may claim the term evangelical."

93Ibid, 23. "Pietism (and later English Methodism) fostered a desire for vibrant personal religion coupled with a social consciousness in the midst of the dead orthodoxy of the state churches. Revivalism, occurring as it did in the context of Puritan concern for certainty of election, pressed an emphasis on an individually experienced conversion in the still-fluid developing evangelical moment."

94Ibid, "This wave of evangelicalism found it most distinctive expression in revivalist America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."
darkness of ages, and live a new and authentic spiritual life when the Word of God is allowed to bring its saving light upon the soul, and when it is proclaimed in its purity, and with power to others.

The Charismatic Movement—Empowerment by the Spirit

The word charismatic—Greek, charisma, means “grace gift,” and is regarded as the heart of the Gospel. According to Barry Callen, the charismatic movement is “essentially about Christian life being immersed in and empowered by the Spirit of God.” Callen also observes that “the deep yearning among God’s people to experience the immediate presence of God” is addressed by the charismatic movement, by calling the attention “on the centrality of the fruit and gifts of the Spirit in Christian life—individually and corporately as the church.”

In the seventeenth century the church “witnessed a new outbreak of the Holy Spirit among ‘Quakers’ led by George Fox.” The Quakers were the most important groups that emerged from Puritanism. “The active presence of the Spirit in the lives of believers,” continues Smith and Graybeal, “became the empowering principle behind scores of conversions. The active role of the Holy Spirit was at the center of their worship,” and He was also the One who “propelled them into evangelism, missions, and social concern.”

Fox, characterized as a “man who acted with the certainty of one who knows God

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95 Callen, 117.
96 Ibid., 122.
97 Doss, 72.
firsthand,” had a lasting spiritual influence upon the Quakers for over forty years. In over “three thousands letters sent mostly to groups,” he covered a “full range of pastoral concern, from the life of prayer and worship to family life to the life of commerce.” Beyond the practical teachings he offered, Fox distinguished himself as the main advocate of what has been called a ‘religious democracy’ of the Spirit.” Fox “affirmed the reality of direct communion with the Holy Spirit,” and believed that “a new age of the Spirit was dawning.” This belief made him urge “Christians to come out of apostate churches and form fellowships of true devotions that would cross all denominational lines.”

Formation of Quaker spiritual life occurred in their meetings, in worship, in prayer, through the preaching of the Word, and by instructions received from George Fox. Silence, one of the main spiritual disciplines characterizing their meetings was practiced by “waiting for inspiration to speak.” “The final criterion for true faith, Fox taught, was the inner light of the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God—rather than creeds, traditions, or even Scripture.”

Here, like modern followers of the charismatic movement up to this day, Fox went too far. While it is true that the Holy Spirit has presidency over the Scriptures, for

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99 Foster and Smith, 218.
100 Ibid.
101 Graham, 282.
102 Callen, 14.
103 Ibid.
104 Doss, 73.
105 Callen, 14.
He is the One who inspired the writing of Scriptures, the Spirit never produces spiritual life contrary to the Word of God.

Modern replicas of charismatic movements can be traced in both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches.\(^{106}\) However, the Pentecostal movement is by far considered the contemporary paradigm of the charismatic movement.\(^{107}\) Unfortunately, a major characteristic of modern waves of the movement, and especially of Pentecostalism is the emphasis on the emotional state to the detriment of reasoning, the stress on so called "the life in the Spirit" to the detriment of Scripture, and the accentuating of the supernatural over the natural. Reinhard Bonnke and Benny Hinn are two adequate examples of this phenomenon.\(^{108}\)

\(^{106}\)See “Charismatic Movement,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charismatic_movement (November 18, 2007). “The charismatic movement began with the adoption of certain beliefs typical of those held by Pentecostal Christians—specifically what are known as the biblical charisms or spiritual gifts: glossolalia (speaking in tongues), prophesying, supernatural healing, etc.—by those within mainstream Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. Many charismatic Christians went on to form separate churches and denominations. The writings of John Fletcher were influential in beginning this movement, which was sparked by the Azusa Street Revival in California, which took place in 1906. . . . Charismatics can now be found within numerous theological movements and in multiple denominations. Charismatic is an umbrella term used to describe those Christians who believe that the manifestations of the Holy Spirit seen in the first century Christian Church, such as faith healing, miracles, prophecy, and glossolalia (speaking in other tongues or languages), are available to contemporary Christians and may be experienced and practiced today.”

\(^{107}\)For an overview of the beginning of the Pentecostal movement with William J. Seymour, supposed to be the most important figure of its beginning, see Graham, 304; To understand how “the movement split inseparable along racial lines,” see Foster, Streams of Living Water, 123;

\(^{108}\)For a review of two great contemporary charismatic revivalists, Reinhard Bonnke and Benny Hinn see G. Edward Reid, Battle of the Spirits (Fulton, MD: Omega Productions, 2001), 85-88. "German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke is conducting mass healings and evangelist crusades all over the continent of Africa. . . . He held crusades in 46 of the 53 countries of African continent. . . . The crowds of 1.6 million for a single night in Lagos, Nigeria, stands as one of the largest Christian gatherings in modern times. . . . He promised the participants, ‘Jesus is the Savior of Nigeria;’ ‘all Nigeria is going to go into heaven!’; ‘paralyzed people are going to walk;’ and ‘the blind will see’. Hundreds surged to the central platform, hoping to proclaim publicly that they had been healed. Come back tomorrow night Bonnke told them afterward, ‘Don’t miss your miracle.’ But veteran missionaries say that there is very little change in the lives of the people when the ‘blessing and prosperity gospel’ preachers leave. One missionary in Lagos said, ‘I don’t see God at work. Honestly, I see a lot of performance, church is the center of social life.’” Benny Hinn become a charismatic Christian in 1972 and was greatly influenced by the ministry of the late evangelist Kathryn Kuhlman. From his official site we learn: “He is a recognized and respected teacher,
Looking back to this movement of the seventeenth century, it can be concluded that the charismatic movement teaches that the Holy Spirit is still the author of spiritual life, and is in the business of creating spiritual life in modern times too. What Fox and his followers experienced might very well be a foretaste of what is about to take place. According to Joel, and Peter, the time will come again when the Holy Spirit will be poured out in an overwhelming measure upon all the faithful children of God. But as in the case of the apostles, the Holy Spirit will do so in ways consistent with the Word of God, upon those who obey the Word (Acts 5:32), and for those who have surrendered their lives to be guided “into all truth” (John 16:13).

The Holiness Movement—Virtue in Thoughts, Words, and Actions

The holiness movement came about as a result of the evangelical and charismatic movements. Though Charles Wesley, John’s brother, and others with him had helped John in his efforts for the movement, the most important figure was John Wesley who

healing evangelist, and best seller author.” His ministry began in December 1974 in Oshawa, Ontario. . . . His international crusade and daily television ministry began in 1990 and has continued to expand. Crowds of over a million have attended services in his international crusades. Hinn claimed recently that Jesus . . . will appear with him on the platform at one of his crusades. . . . The Lord is physically appearing in the Muslim world. I’m telling you . . . I am hearing it now more and more and more. Since we preachers cannot go there, Jesus is going there Himself.” Later in the same program Hinn reported, “I believe—hear this, hear this! I believe that Jesus . . . is about to appear physically, in meetings and to believers around the world to wake us up. . . . You know a prophetess sent me a word through my wife, right here, and she said, ‘Tell your husband that Jesus is go’n to physically appear in his meetings.” Benny Hinn now says that he “communicates with the dead and talks in person with Elijah and spirits.”

109See Acts 2:17-18, “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. See also Joel 2:28.
gave shape to the Methodist movement and who, within Methodism, developed what became known as the holiness movement.

Two specific events became decisive in John Wesley’s pursuit of holiness, both personally and as a movement. One, his decision as a student at Oxford, to dedicate his whole life to God in order to live a holy life,” and two, the assurance of salvation he experienced when he visited the spiritual meeting in Aldersgate Street.” Thus, for Wesley, holiness was indispensably connected to the experience of salvation, based on a personal decision to pursue it and an intentional plan for its realization.

For Wesley, the three “main doctrines” of the movement involved repentance, faith, and holiness. He put these three elements in a logical sequence; repentance—“the porch of religion;” faith—“the door of religion;” and holiness—being “religion itself.” The conclusion is clear; “the goal for Wesley was holiness, which he called ‘the fullness of faith.’ And the result was not something theoretical or vague, but was practical and


111 Collins, A Real Christian, 155.

112 See Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, 9. “Instantly I resolved to dedicate all my life to God, all my thoughts, and words, and actions, being thoroughly convinced, there was no medium; but that every part of my life (not some only) must either be a sacrifice to God or myself, that is, in effect, to the devil.”

113 See Donald E. Demaray, Devotions and Prayers of John Wesley (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1957), 56. “In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

specific; it was "righteousness," "Christian perfection," "a life of love," a life of "happiness;" it was the very "renewal of the image of God" in humanity.

Deeply rooted in the Word of God and convinced that he had a special mission for the world, John Wesley lifted up the goal and standard of holiness. The genius of Wesley's movement lay in the guidance given to common people in their quest of a life of spiritual formation through the practice of spiritual disciplines. In their quest for holiness, Wesley "implanted a strong desire that Christians not merely accept Christ as Savior, but that they mature in their relationship with Him.

Wesley perceived that spiritual growth takes place best in a group setting of mutual support and encouragement." Therefore, he organized members into small groups called bands, classes, and societies. The purpose of those small groups

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115 Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, 41.
116 Watson, 187.
117 Ibid., 62.
119 Ibid., 131-132.
120 Watson, 179.
121 Mulholland, Shaped by the Word, 124.
123 On small groups, see Burrill, The Revolutioned Church of the 21st Century, 94-95. "The classes and the bands. The bands were optional; the classes were required of all those who desired to stay in membership. The result was established of on-going system of pastoral care." On select societies, see Watson, 187, "The quest for Christian perfection was most clearly expressed, however, in the formation of an even more intimate grouping, the select societies. Wesley's purpose in forming these groups was to direct those members whom he regarded as 'continually walking in the light of God, and having fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,' in the path to perfection. In these meetings, the members learned how to 'improve every talent they had received,' how to 'love one another more, and to watch carefully over each other.'"
meetings was for spiritual formation, to introduce and hold new converts “accountable for their life in Christ.” In their meetings they studied the Bible and built relationships.\textsuperscript{124} John Wesley’s guidelines in approaching Scripture for spiritual formation were of great help.\textsuperscript{125} He was a “skilled and perceptive” person who would lead the meetings and make sure that the participants follow the “band rules.”\textsuperscript{126} At every meeting, in connection to spiritual renewal, five questions that dealt with sin and temptations were asked.\textsuperscript{127}

The use of such specific spiritual disciplines as Bible study, meditation, and hearing the voice of God in spiritual formation toward holiness was central under the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{124}See Mulholland, \textit{Shaped by the Word}, 124-131. John Wesley provides six guidelines and a conclusion. (1) “set apart a little time . . . every morning and evening for studying the Word of God;” (2) “at each time, if you have leisure, read a chapter out of the Old and one out of the New Testament; (3) in approaching each passage of Scripture, do it “with a single eye, to know the whole will of God, and a fixed resolution to do it;” (4) “have a constant eye to the analogy of faith, the connection and harmony there is between those grand fundamental doctrines, original sin, justification by faith, the new birth, inward and outward holiness;” (5) guidelines urge that when we approach the scripture, “serious and earnest prayer should be consistently used before we consult the oracles of God, since ‘Scripture can only be understood through the same Spirit whereby it was given.’ Our reading should likewise be closed with prayer, that what we read may be written on our hearts;” (6) “it might also be of use if, while we read, we were frequently to pause and examine ourselves by what we read, both with regard to our heart and lives.” This self-examination is the conscious, disciplined opening of ourselves to be addressed by the Word. It is, on the one hand, the examination of the outer actions of our lives.” Then Wesley adds, “Whatever light you then receive should be used to the uttermost, and that immediately. Let there be no delay. Whatever you resolve begin to execute the first moment you can.”

\item \textsuperscript{125}See Watson, 184. It implied a specific program that had to be rigorously followed. Each class was assigned a leader, who, according to Watson, became “the pivotal figure in early Methodist spirituality.”

\item \textsuperscript{126}“In these Band Rules, it was stipulated that the leader, “some person among us,” was to “speak his own state first, and then ask the rest, in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, such as Have you the forgiveness of your sins? Have you the witness of God’s Spirit with your spirit? Has no sin, inward or outward, dominion over you? Do you desire to be told of all your faults? Do you desire that, in doing this, we should come as close as possible, that we should cut to the quick, and search your heart to the bottom?” See Watson, 181.

\item \textsuperscript{127}The question dealt with sin and temptation: “What known Sin have you committed since our last meeting? What Temptations have you met with? How was [sic] you delivered? What have you thought, said or done, of which you doubt whether it be a Sin or not? Have you nothing you desire to keep secret?” Watson, 181.

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leadership of John Wesley. Prayer, as "the grand means of drawing near to God" and of communication with Him, was to be mixed with all other means. A serious searching of heart, followed by confessing of sin, was part of the daily devotional life. Frequent communion and fasting, sometimes two times a week, characterized the movement as well. Thus, the holiness movement "sought not only to evangelize individuals, but also to change society and to abolish slavery."

The results in pursuing a life of holiness in the life of John Wesley as well as in the life of his followers were amazing. Ingvar Haddal observes that when Wesley died "there were three hundred and thirteen preachers in Great Britain and seventy-six thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight members. In America there were one hundred and ninety-eight preachers and fifty-seven thousand six hundred and twenty-one members."

The influence of the holiness movement emerged in other denominations and impacted other great Christian leaders, too. Charles G. Finney (1792-1875), who was particularly influenced by Wesley's Plain Account of Christian Perfection, and Ellen

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128Harper, 133.

129Ibid., 189-190.


131Stephen Tomkins, John Wesley, A Biography (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 159.


133See Watson, 205. "Not that the holiness movement was confined to Methodism. It emerged in other denominations with different emphases, as, for example, in the person of Charles Grandison Finney, whose methods in the 1820s in the northeastern states pioneered many of the methods of modern revivalism. Finney turned to a theological career in the 1830s, and was particularly influenced by Wesley's Plain Account of Christian Perfection, which he read in 1836." See also Graham, 288. Finney was an advocate of Christian perfection. "According to Finney, holiness consists primarily in the perfection of the will and is available to every Christian after conversion. In his Lectures to Professing Christians, published
G. White (1827-1915), who was born into a Methodist family, are two representatives. Finney, second only to George Whitefield, "as a shaper of revivalism," stressed the importance of holiness in Christian life. Called "America’s foremost revivalist," Finney was a major leader of the Second Great Awakening in America. His great impact was not only on the spiritual life but also "on the social history of the United States of America."  

Ellen White, who had a major role in shaping the Seventh-day Adventist Church, showed a serious and personal interest in the life of John Wesley and the main teachings of the holiness movement. She lived, wrote, and preached about the importance of in 1837, Finney gave his understanding of the doctrine: Christians perfection is perfect obedience to the law of God. The law of God requires perfect disinterested, impartial benevolence—love to God and love to our neighbor. It requires that we be motivated by that same feeling, and act on the same principles upon God acts."

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134 See Ellen G. White, http://www.whiteestate.org/about/egwbio.asp (November 18, 2007). Ellen White "was a woman of remarkable spiritual gifts who lived most of her life during the nineteenth century (1827-1915), yet through her writings she is still making a revolutionary impact on millions of people around the world. During her lifetime she wrote more than 5,000 periodical articles and 40 books; but today, including compilations from her 50,000 pages of manuscripts, more than 100 titles are available in English. She is the most translated woman writer in the entire history of literature, and the most translated American author of either gender. Her writings cover a broad range of subjects, including religion, education, social relationships, evangelism, prophecy, publishing, nutrition, and management. Her life-changing masterpiece on successful Christian living, Steps to Christ, has been published in more than 140 languages." Seventh-day Adventists believe that Mrs. White was more than a gifted writer; they believe she was appointed by God as a special messenger to draw the world's attention to the Holy Scriptures and help prepare people for Christ's second advent.

135 See Russell Burrill, Recovering an Adventist Approach to the Life and the Mission of the Local Church (Fallbrook CA: Hart Research, 1998), 146, 149. "Methodism shaped the thinking of early Adventists pioneers such as Ellen White. . . . Many of the earliest pioneers had been Methodists; foremost among whom was Ellen White."

136 Graham, 287.


138 White writes, "Wesley and his associates were led to see that true religion is seated in the heart, and that God's law extends to the thoughts as well as to the words and actions. Convinced of the necessity of holiness of heart, as well as correctness of outward deportment, they set out in earnest upon a new life. By the most diligent and prayerful efforts they endeavored to subdue the evils of the natural heart." See Ellen White, The Great Controversy, 254.
holiness in Christian life. In fact, one of her favorite expressions and major themes in her writings was the “holiness of heart.” It is amazing to see how biblical, beautiful, and practical she presents the concept of holiness. Based on her writings, on her preaching, and on the life she lived, Ellen G. White is, one of the most outstanding modern representatives of the holiness movement—perhaps the most outstanding one. Her influence and writings are still felt in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and are highly appreciated by those Christians who long for a holy life. Her influence and writings represent an inspiration and guide for all those who are on the spiritual journey of holiness.

Who can measure all the results of this outstanding movement? Only God can. The last testimony that is given by John Wesley himself, just a night before his death, though does not measure the results of the holiness movement tells the secret of its great

139 See Ellen White, The Acts of the Apostles, 503; Conflict and Courage, 347 (1970); The Desire of Ages, 173; Faith and Works, 29; The Faith I Live By, 119; God’s Amazing Grace, 84; Gospel Workers, 332; etc.

140 See Ellen White, Sons and Daughters of God, 10. “Holiness of heart and purity of life were the great subjects of the teachings of Christ.” See, The Acts of the Apostles, 503. White affirms that there must be earnest “efforts to attain to holiness of heart.” See Christian Experiences and the Teachings of Ellen G. White, 23. The mind should “constantly dwelt upon the subject of holiness of heart.” We must cherish meekness and holiness of heart.” See The Faith I Live By, 119. “Those who are battling with daily temptations, overcoming their own sinful tendencies, and seeking for holiness of heart and life, make no boastful claims of holiness. They are hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Sin appears to them exceedingly sinful.” See Life Sketches of James White and Ellen G. White, 150. She talks about “the perfect joy of holiness of heart.” See Our High Calling, 338. “She also makes the comment that “without purity and holiness of heart, we cannot win the crown of immortal glory.” See Selected Messages, Book 2, 29. “Holiness of heart will never lead to impure actions.” See Testimonies for the Church, 2:445. “It is the absence of spirituality, of holiness, which leads to unrighteous acts, to envy, hatred, jealousy, evil surmisings, and every hateful and abominable sin.” See Review and Herald, April 26, 1881. “But he who is earnestly seeking for holiness of heart and life, delights in the law of God.” See Sons and Daughters of God, 10. “Holiness of heart will produce right actions. . . . As God is pure in His sphere, so man is to be pure in his. And he will be pure if Christ is formed within, the hope of glory; for he will imitate Christ’s life and reflect His character.”
success. Gathering his strength, John cried out, "The best of all, God is with us!" Yes, the most important thing that can be said is that God was with Wesley, and God was with the movement as well.

Christians today can learn valuable lessons from John Wesley and his wonderful movement. First, a personal encounter with God within the realm of Scriptures is absolutely necessary in the Christian life in order for the process of spirituality to begin. Second, that first encounter with God must be followed by successive other encounters in order for spiritual life to grow.

Third, holiness is not an option for Christians but a quality, a characteristic every true Christian must have. Holiness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit’s presence in the human heart. It is a natural result of that personal encounter with God and a proof that the relationship keeps on growing.

Fourth, holiness is not only a private matter but is a process that develops in the context of relationships with other human beings. Here, the small group concept seems to be one of the best methods of fellowshipping with other Christians on the journey of holiness. "Wesley perceived that spiritual growth takes place best in a group setting where there can be mutual support and encouragement for those pursuing the life of holiness."142

Fifth, spiritual disciplines are extremely important for the experience of holiness. Because "holiness is a growing and continuous experience in Christ,"143 the spiritual

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141 Tomkins, 158.
142 Burrill, 143.
143 Raoul Dederen, “The Church,” Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 563.
disciplines become the main tools to help that experience grow. The spiritual disciplines of prayer, study of Scripture, worship, witnessing, and the like were the main means to the holiness of Wesley’s movement.

In conclusion, the holiness movement is a living testimony that Christ’s example of purity in thought, word, and deed can be reproduced successfully in the human life. The main lesson for all Christians is obvious; when the human soul surrenders in faith to the work and guidance of the Holy Spirit, the life will be changed into the likeness of Christ. When the experience of salvation is followed by an intentional process of spiritual growth, and when that process takes place within the boundaries of God’s Word, and through the means of spiritual disciplines, the result will be a life of holiness with “fruits that will last” for the glory of God.

The Incarnational Movement—Uniting the Physical and Spiritual

The incarnational movement concerns the relationship between the spiritual and physical. The central figure of the incarnational movement was Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf. Zinzendorf was born at Dresden, May 26, 1700. He “was a man of noble birth possessing considerable wealth.” He had both a good education and a big heart for evangelism. His love for Jesus and his zeal for souls can be seen since he was a child until his death in 1760.\[145\]

\[144\]See Nikolaus Zinzendorf, [http://hymnus.luthersem.edu/hcompan/writers/zinzendo.htm](http://hymnus.luthersem.edu/hcompan/writers/zinzendo.htm) (November 20, 2007). He was a pupil at the famous Pietist school of Francke at Halle, Germany, where he organized a mission society known as “The Order of the Grain of Mustard Seed.” Count Zinzendorf was educated at the Paedagogium at Halle (1710-1716) and at the University of Wittenberg (1716-1719); became Hof-und Justizrath at the Saxon court at Dresden in the autumn of 1721; received a license to preach from the Theological Faculty of the University of Tübingen in 1734; and was consecrated Bishop of the Moravian Brethren’s Unity at Berlin, May 10, 1737.

Several events in his childhood, in adolescence, and in the first years of his youth prepared him to be the leader of the movement. When he was only ten years old "his soul was fired with a passionate desire to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout the world." As a teenager, Zinzendorf along with a group of other young nobles formed a secret religious society called "The Order of the Grain of Mustard Seed," with the purpose to use their position and influence to spread the Gospel. Some years later, at the age of nineteen, as a young count, he was profoundly moved by looking at a painting with Jesus crucified. Then and there, under a powerful spiritual impression, Zinzendorf vowed "to dedicate his life to service to Christ." And on his wedding day in 1722, he and his young bride made the spiritual and extraordinary decision to commit their lives to the most important mission in life—to winning souls for Christ.

The incamational movement of the eighteenth century appeared out of a serious "A man of 'a naturally alert and active mind,' and an enthusiastic temperament, Zinzendorf was an eager seeker after truth. He was a natural orator, characterized by simplicity in dress, but surrounded with an atmosphere of great personal dignity. His passion was the happiness and comfort of others, 'even in little things.'"


See http://www.zinzendorf.com/countz.htm (November 20, 2007). "As a teenager at Halle Academy, he and several other young nobles formed a secret society, The Order of the Grain of Mustard Seed. The stated purpose of this order was that the members would use their position and influence to spread the Gospel. As an adult, Zinzendorf later reactivated this adolescent society, and many influential leaders of Europe ended up joining the group. A few included the King of Denmark, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Archbishop of Paris."


http://www.zinzendorf.com/countz.htm (November 20, 2007). "During his Grand Tour (a rite of passage for young aristocrats) Nicolas visited an art museum in Dusseldorf where he saw a Domenico Feti painting titled Ecce Homo, 'Behold the Man.' It portrayed the crucified Christ with the legend, 'This have I done for you - Now what will you do for me'? The young count as profoundly moved and appears to have had an almost mystical experience while looking at the painting, feeling as if Christ himself was speaking those words to his heart. He vowed that day to dedicate his life to service to Christ."

spiritual crisis. Protestantism lost much of its spiritual power, and the few devoted Christians who committed to keeping the spirit of the Reformation were persecuted. Zinzendorf permitted the survivors of the persecuted Moravian Church to live under his domain.151 These Christians came from Roman Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran, Anabaptist, Hussies, and other Protestants groups, and sought to continue the Reformation, living together in spiritual unity (John 17:23), and consequently impact the world through their witness of the Gospel.

In a few weeks, however, these committed followers of the Reformation were at war with each other, acting exactly the same way as those of whom they were persecuted. When Von Zinzendorf and other spiritual leaders of the community made an appeal for concerted prayer that God would pour His Spirit upon their divisiveness the Holy Spirit made His presence among them visible, and repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual harmony took over the community.152

That was the beginning of incarnational movement, and what followed constitutes great lessons of spirituality for the Christian church. The experience of receiving the Holy Spirit did not lead them to take spiritual life easy; on the contrary, a steady spiritual growth characterized their lives. The marks of the movement were spiritual formation, the practice of spiritual disciplines, and mission for the world.

The new community of believers was led in daily Bible studies, and in prayer.153 For example, from the time they determined to seek God for revival and reformation, the


152 Ibid.

153 Smith and Graybeal, 28.
group "instituted [a] twenty-four-hour prayer vigil—two women and two men praying each hour."\(^{154}\) That practice did not end when the crisis was solved, but the Moravians "continued to pray twenty-four hours a day, with no break, for one hundred years! Wherever a Moravian community was established, twenty-four-hour concerted prayers was also established."\(^{155}\)

The most distinctive aspect of their spirituality is seen here in what happened in their daily activities. "The Moravians joyfully served God—praying, evangelizing, and helping others—in the midst of baking, teaching, weaving, and raising families."\(^{156}\) In fact, Morris notes that their relationships were marked by "a close brotherly intercourse in prayer, song, instruction and daily work" and "each member was to confide to the others the concern of his soul."\(^{157}\)

The spiritual discipline of witnessing, like that of prayer, was developed beyond common attempts. During this time of spiritual growth, "two thousand missionaries went out from their communities to almost every corner of the earth."\(^{158}\) Missionary colonies were settled in many parts of the world. Their missionary zeal continues in the Moravian Church up to this day. "It is claimed that for every fifty-eight members of the Church at home, there is one missionary in foreign lands."\(^{159}\)

\(^{154}\)Patterson, 166.

\(^{155}\)Ibid.

\(^{156}\)Smith and Graybeal, 28.

\(^{157}\)Morris, 66.

\(^{158}\)Patterson, 166.

\(^{159}\)http://hymnus.luthersem.edu/hcompanion/writers/zinzendo.htm (November 20, 2007).
The contribution and influence of Zinzendorf and his movement on modern Christianity is amazing. The movement’s emphasis on the “religion of the heart” deeply influenced the main leaders of Methodism. It was in a Moravian prayer meeting on Aldersgate Street in London that a “failed and discouraged missionary named John Wesley felt his heart ‘strangely warmed,’” and where the holiness movement was born.

Their experience of spiritual renewal was not static or solely emotional. Nor was it an end in itself. On the contrary, their experience was dynamic and progressive. It “led to the beginning of the Protestant World Mission movement.” Some consider Zinzendorf “The real mission father.” Even William Carey, the Baptist missionary, who “is often referred to as the Father of Modern Missions . . .” would credit Zinzendorf


161 Patterson, 167.

162 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolaus_Ludwig_Zinzendorf (November 20, 2007). “Missionary colonies had by this time been settled in the West Indies (1732), in Greenland (1733), amongst the North American Indians (1735); and before Zinzendorf’s death the Brethren had sent from Hermhut missionary colonies to Livonia and the northern shores of the Baltic, to the slaves of North Carolina, to Suriname, to the Negro slaves in several parts of South America, to Tranquebar and the Nicobar Islands in the East Indies, to the Copts in Egypt, to the Inuit of Labrador, and to the west coast of South Africa. The community in Hermhut, from which almost all these colonies had been sent out, had no money of its own, and Zinzendorf had almost exclusively furnished its expenses.”

163 See http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/special/131christians/zinzendorf.html] (November 20, 2007). Zinzendorf is called the “The real missions father. Visiting Copenhagen in 1731 to attend the coronation of King Christian VI, Zinzendorf met a converted slave from the West Indies, Anthony Ulrich. The man was looking for someone to go back to his homeland to preach the gospel to black slaves, including his sister and brother. Zinzendorf raced back to Hermhut to find men to go; two immediately volunteered, becoming the first Moravian missionaries—and the first Protestant missionaries of the modern era, antedating William Carey (often called “the father of modern missions”) by 60-some years. Within two decades, Zinzendorf sent missionaries around the globe: to Greenland, Lapland, Georgia, Surinam, Africa’s Guinea Coast, South Africa, Amsterdam’s Jewish quarter, Algeria, the native North Americans, Ceylon, Romania, and Constantinople. In short order, more than 70 missionaries from a community of fewer than 600 answered the call. By the time Zinzendorf died in 1760 in Hermhut, the Moravians had sent out at least 226 missionaries.”
with that role, for he often referred to the model of the earlier Moravians in his
journal.\textsuperscript{164}

The lessons for Christianity are simple but extremely significant. First, God can
do great things through a small number of people when they consecrate wholeheartedly
to Him. The Christians that surrounded Zinzendorf were not many, but the effects of their
godly lives can be seen up to this day. Second, there is a solution for dry and lifeless
Christian religion, and that is a revival through the Holy Spirit. When Protestantism lost
its spiritual power, power came in abundance upon those who sought God in prayer with
all their heart.

Third, spiritual formation has to be intentional in order to produce an authentic
spirituality. Theirs was an intentional program that took place through the practice of
spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible study, worship, and fellowship. It can be seen in their
experience that prayer can change everything in life. The prayers that brought on them
the outpouring of the Holy Spirit brought about biblical unity as well. That Spirit of
prayer eliminated dissension, hatred, and the spirit of intolerance from among them
completely.

Fourth, a true spirituality can and is meant to be lived in every circumstance of
life regardless of time, or conditions. The Moravians expressed their biblical spirituality
in the most common things of life. Fifth, Christian life is about mission—winning souls
for Christ, which involves a spirit of sacrifice. What a great lesson for the spiritual apathy
and lifeless Christians today! While the Catholic Church was chasing the authentic
Protestants Christians and while the Protestants at large lost their passion for spirituality,

\textsuperscript{164}http://www.zinzendorf.com/countz.htm (November 20, 2007).
the Moravians, under the leadership of Zinzendorf found purpose and meaning for their existence in focusing on the mission to the world. They teach the lesson that to live a spiritual life, means to live for the salvation of others.

This is the conclusion: The incarnational movement, under Zinzendorf’s spiritual leadership demonstrated that spiritual life is mainly about two things; it is about God, and about winning the world for Christ. They convey the message that what Jesus experienced as a child and as a young man, in fulfilling His duties to God and to men, is possible to be reproduced in the life of every Christian. When men and women seek God in perseverant prayer until the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and when they take God with them everywhere they go, the changes that follow are remarkable. Spiritual fellowship among believers, personal spiritual growth, and the fulfillment of our mission to the world become inevitable spiritual realities.

Summary

Seven movements of spirituality have been reviewed in this chapter. Every movement surveyed had a prominent leader or a few at the center of the movement. In every case the movement was born in the heart of those who later became leaders. Every movement was also characterized by a form of spiritual renewal, and set of spiritual disciplines were practiced. There was a tendency in every movement to go back to allowing the model of Christ. While there seems to be a consensus that each movement emphasized some specific habit of Christ’s spirituality, there was usually more than one practice existing in each of them.

No dimension of spirituality can stands by itself. Love, devotion to God and the influence of the Holy Spirit seem to have been present in every movement. It was love to
God, and a spirit of authentic devotion, produced by the Holy Spirit that made those people belonging to the contemplative movement to seek a life of complete intimacy with Christ.

These same three elements motivated the representatives of the social justice movement to live for the sick and needy. And when the Spirit came upon the Quakers, He did it in the context of their devotional life which filled them with love as an empowering principle behind scores of conversions. The evangelical movement was also inspired and led by the Spirit, motivated by love, and developed by devotional approach of the Word.

The holiness movement would never have become authentic without the Holy Spirit’s involvement in making men and women holy. Moreover, holiness had to be maintained and developed through the practice of devotional disciplines, otherwise it ceased to exist.

The same is true with the incarnational movement. It was only when the Spirit of God took possession of the heart of Moravians that they reconciled and had love for each other. These happened in the context of unceasing prayer and continued in the context of their spiritual formation.

While it is true that each movement emphasized one aspect of Christ’s spirituality, and that representatives of each movement are recognized by the distinguishing mark of their movement, it is also true that when people lacked the Holy Spirit, and love and devotion to God, they ceased to be a movement reflecting Christ or fulfilled God’s mission. They degenerated into a human endeavor or into a counterfeit.165

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165See the case of Martin Luther who following in the footsteps of the contemplative movement, almost lost his life, and the case of the modern charismatic revivals that pretend to be in line with the Spirit, and with the holiness movement that raises the human feelings above the Word of God.
Another important point should be mentioned: not every movement had the same spiritual light. The closer a movement was to the whole Word of God the closer was the character of that movement to Christ's example and more significant its impact upon the world.166

Modeling Christ's spirituality calls for balance and wholeness. Of all spiritual movements in Christian history, this author perceives the apostolic movement reflects more accurately all seven dimensions of Christ's spirituality. Therefore, when seeking a human model of spirituality that is whole and biblical, the apostolic model is the best to be followed.

Other movements of spirituality that were not surveyed in this chapter include the Adventist movement. The author considers the resemblance of Adventism with the apostolic movement as absolutely striking in that all seven characteristics of Christ's spirituality have a place in the doctrine, mission, and literature of this movement. The spiritual mission of the Adventist movement is twofold: to build a spiritual community on the foundation laid by the apostles—to repeat their experience in following the example of Christ, and to prepare the way for Christ's soon return.

The next chapter will reflect on the development and application of spirituality at the North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church.

166 The evangelical movement and the holiness movement are two of the most relevant examples in this respect. In the same line of thought, the principle of "the present truth," unnoticed by most of the writers, played an important role, too. As in the case of the evangelical movement, when the time for the Reformation came, God found thirsting hearts, and provided divine ways to reveal the great truth of the ages: that man is saved only through Christ, and is justified by faith in Him alone.
CHAPTER 4

HISTORY AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES OF NORTH MIAMI BEACH SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Introduction

In order to initiate a spiritual formation program in the North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church, a number of factors relating to the Church’s history and members’ interest in participating in such a program had to be taken into consideration. This chapter will also focus briefly on members’ exposure to spiritual formation since the church’s establishment in 1986, members’ enrollment in the program, and personal reflections on this spiritual formation project.

A Brief History of North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church

In the fall of 1986 about fifty-six persons of the North Miami Seventh-day Adventist Church signed a covenant to relocate and thus be part of a great spiritual adventure. Two reasons were behind that action. First, the mother church had become too small for the increasing attendance, and second, northeast Dade County did not have any Seventh-day Adventist presence. Although a number of members lived in the area, there was no organized church or group of believers. In less than two years the group grew from fifty-six members to eighty-three, thus on May 7, 1988 the first Seventh-day
Adventist Church was established\(^1\) in North Miami Beach located in the northeast area of Dade County. More than ten countries were represented in the church, which varied over the years, increasing from sixteen in 2000 to twenty-two in 2005.\(^2\)

The founding members regarded themselves as a movement, therefore their life was characterized by fervent spirituality, enthusiastic fellowship, and intentional outreach activities. They were unconcerned about what kind of facility they had as their main focus was a strategic location, a proper spirit, and a proper mission. Their rented church building was an old-fashioned, unappealing Methodist Church building with poor ambience for worship and other church activities. Consequently, over the years members moved to other churches who offered better worship conditions. For example, in 1988 when the young mission-driven church had thirteen baptisms, seven members transferred to other churches. Such unpleasant realities compelled the pioneers to add a new goal to their agenda—a church building of their own, in the same area, and for the same original purpose—to reach others with the message of salvation while offering a proper environment for worship.

Over the years that original first love began to diminish and the missionary spirit began to fade. From 1988 to 2005 spiritual activities that portrayed the life of the church were no different than those in any other Christian church. To fulfill its mission in reaching out to the community, some Bible studies were given, some door-to-door attempts were made to distribute literature, nursing home visitations occurred,

\(^{1}\)See Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Church Records Office.

\(^{2}\)The following countries were represented: United States of America, Canada, Jamaica, Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, Haiti, Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Columbia, Brazil, Czech Republic, Peru, Romania, Trinidad, Poland, Nicaragua, St. Lucia, Grenada, Guyana, and Romania.
community service programs happened, and one evangelistic series was held resulting in thirty-four new members.

However, except for a few isolated training workshops over the years, there is no trace of any spiritual formation program for church members. This lack of spiritual growth emphasis is believed to have affected all aspects of church life and its mission. The history of the church does not record any outstanding growth in numbers or quality of spiritual life. A statistical analysis of the membership\(^3\) shows that the net growth from 1988 to 2005 was only 21 members (from 83 members to 104). While the total number of baptisms over this period was 118 (plus 33 new members by profession of faith), the number of transfers was 86, reducing the net gain significantly. The poorest period seems to have been between 1996 and 2005, a time when people cannot mention even one great spiritual event that marked the life of the church.

The conclusion is evident; a great spiritual need of the church had to be addressed. A spiritual formation program seemed a critically important action necessary for the church and hopefully resulting in revitalizing its life and mission. While most of the pioneers were gone, a remnant remained who had not lost their first love or enthusiasm. Consequently, their influence on new members was positive. They shared their original motives in establishing a new church, of having their own church building, and of fulfilling God's mission for their part of the world. The church now seemed ripe for a special spiritual emphasis to meet the deepest spiritual needs of its members, and be an instrument in making all those dreams come true.

\(^3\)Ibid.
Assessing the Exposure and the Interest of Members to Spiritual Formation

In the month of September 2005 at a church board meeting information was shared about the pastor’s intention to start a spiritual formation program in the church. The board voted unanimously that the program should be implemented. The board members were so convinced that the program would be of such major importance for the growth of the church that all of them signed up to be participants in the program, with only two exceptions, participate and remain faithful students until its completion.

To assess the exposure of church members to spiritual formation, the following steps were taken. First, a simple five question survey was given to each member one Sabbath morning. The first two questions were: (1) Have you previously attended a Spiritual Formation Program? (2) Do you remember a Spiritual Formation Program presented in North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church since you have been a member of this Church?

If the member answered “yes” to either of the questions, they were asked to specify the time and content of the program they attended. Second, a discussion with church board members was conducted as to whether they remembered a time when the church had been trained in spirituality or a group of members exposed to specific spiritual formation teachings. Third, informal interviews with select long-term members were conducted. Fourth, a dialogue with the founding pastor who led the church during its most important years of development was initiated.

This four step assessment of North Miami Beach members to spiritual formation revealed that only three members had participated in some spiritual formation seminars while attending previous churches. Prior to the program’s beginning information was
dispensed and each member over the age eighteen was invited to enroll in the program. Two months prior to the program's launch, church bulletin inserts, Sabbath morning announcements, personal invitations to church board members and individual church members, and a Sabbath morning letter were all used to 'market' the upcoming event. The content of the personal letter specified clearly the purpose of the project was to implement a Spiritual Formation Program in the North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church and to measure the affect of the program upon the spiritual life of participants.

The design planned for four spiritual seminars over a period of at least four months including weekly meetings and personal discussions. Attendees would learn how to have an abundant devotional life and practice the presence of God all the time. It was also intended that by attending the spiritual formation program, participants would experience significant progress in their spiritual life and in all their relationships. The church was informed that Christ's spirituality would be presented as an example to be followed, and a set of spiritual disciplines would be taught as a means of nurturing their relationship with the Lord, with themselves, and with others.

This invitation was extended and repeated for everyone regardless of their spiritual state. The purpose of the Spiritual Formation Program was to guide everyone in experiencing God and His salvation in a personal and authentic way, and to prepare them to live their lives through Jesus and for Jesus. The program began the first week of October 2005.
Personal Reflections on Spiritual Formation

“True spirituality is characterized by a mind preoccupied with ‘things above.’”

That means an intentional process. Human beings need formation, training, and discipline. The concept of spiritual formation is rooted in the Bible. The whole Bible is a book for spiritual formation. It started in Eden and continues throughout the Old and New Testament until Christ’s second coming. It will continue in heaven, and throughout eternity.

In the wilderness, after the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt, God took His people through a process of spiritual formation. The sanctuary with the ceremonial system and the teachings of the Law were designed for the formation of spiritual life. When Jesus started His ministry, He trained the disciples for a life of spiritual walk with God. The Holy Spirit, poured out upon the first Christians, not only guided them into all truth, but endowed them with spiritual gifts to be used for the glory of God and the benefit of the church. The disciples, under the presence of the Holy Spirit, led others in the process of spiritual formation. The pattern continued down through the centuries for sincere children of God, who submitted their lives to the leading of the Holy Spirit and were determined to follow the example of Christ. In fact, without a process of formation, physical and spiritual life will not develop and progress harmoniously as God designed.

Habits are the most important aspects of character formation. The influence of habit in spiritual formation, like in the physical realm, plays a determining role in the quality of spiritual life. Good habits contribute toward an authentic spiritual life while bad habits take people on the road of degrading spirituality. Habits form character.

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Humanity's sinful nature is made up of countless bad habits. When the spiritual growth begins, the process of changing habits begins too. Habits are difficult to change. Change does not happen overnight—it takes time, perseverance, and patience.

Therefore, there must be an intentional plan based upon convincing information, a plan developed with adequate time, with adequate means, and with a clear purpose in mind, before new habits are formed and the fruit of spiritual change appears in one's life. If there is no intentional plan, if the plan does not involve time, repetition, perseverance, patience, and if it does not involve spiritual disciplines, any serious attempt to change life or to live a spiritual life is destined to failure. Sincere desires for change, along with good intentions, are not enough for spiritual growth to happen. All the "good purposes and good intentions," states Ellen G. White, "will not enable you to withstand evil. You must be men and women of prayer."\(^5\) The conclusion is simple, whether it is called teaching, training, mentoring, guidance, molding, shaping, spiritual direction, or disciplining, spiritual formation must take place in the life in order to experience true spirituality and to be conformed to the image of God.

Three important aspects have to be taken into consideration in spiritual formation. First, church members need to be taught how to restore their personal relationship with God and with their fellow men. Second, they need to learn how to maintain, deepen, and develop this new relationship until it reaches full maturity, and true spirituality becomes a reality. And, third, they need to learn how to fulfill God's mission in the world, by introducing others to the same spiritual formation process in which they have been involved.

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To be more concrete, a spiritual formation program must include the concept of walking with God or ‘practicing the presence of God’ and include a set of spiritual disciplines that accomplish this goal. God is to be the Teacher, the Master, the Lord, the Guide, the Potter—the Creator who creates a new life in human beings. Consequently, human being must be the student, the disciple, the servant, the clay, who not only accepts God’s intervention in his life, but also engages himself or herself in the process. There must be a relationship of cooperation between God and the human being. There must be a human participation or contribution in the process. While it is acknowledged that only God changes lives, that only He produces spiritual life, it should also be known that without a person’s participation in the process of such formation, nothing will change. Thus, spiritual formation is essential for all people’s own spirituality and for the fulfillment of God’s plan in their lives.

Summary

With the exception of three members, the North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church had not been exposed to a program of spiritual formation. While church life included spiritual services and various activities, the members had not been taught specifically in the dimensions of spiritual life nor been taken through a period of training in the disciplines of spiritual life.

This chapter dealt briefly with the spiritual history of North Miami Beach SDA Church, the exposure of its members to spiritual formation since the church was established, and the plan for the implementation of a spiritual formation program in the church. The conclusion was clear—based upon the history of the congregation, of the results of the assessment regarding the exposure of church members to spiritual
formation, and based upon personal reflections regarding the vital importance of the
development of the spiritual life—the church needed something to enhance spirituality.
An intentional program of spiritual formation was considered essential for the growth and
spiritual maturity of church members. They needed to be taught how to walk with God,
how to maintain a permanent connection with Him throughout the day, how to practice
the spiritual disciplines of spiritual life, and how to advance in the things of God. The
development and the implementation of such a program is described in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM

Developing a Spiritual Formation Program for North Miami
Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church

The main task of this project was to develop and implement a spiritual formation program which would lead a selected group of church members into a dynamic spiritual life. Program development would necessitate a structure, a group of participants, spiritual material, a schedule, and a plan to implement a set of spiritual teachings and principles. The seminars were built on the biblical and theological foundations of spirituality explored in chapter two. The goal of the seminars was to help participants learn how to practice the presence of God in their lives and experience a deeper and authentic spirituality. To accomplish this goal the spiritual formation program was developed in two stages.

The main focus of the first stage was to instill in participants the concept of restoration of the relationship between humankind and God. To correctly understand that concept, a set of seminars was developed that addressed the sin problem and its consequences upon the relationship between humanity and God, including God’s remedy for the broken relationship—the problem caused by sin. Of major importance for the restoration of this relationship is the work of the Holy Spirit in the human heart. The Holy Spirit is the author of spiritual life, therefore a set of teachings about His role as
author of spiritual life and work was developed. The objective was to help the participants realize the importance of the Holy Spirit in spirituality and to urge them to pray and prepare the way for receiving the Holy Spirit in their lives. To accomplish this, a ten-day plan was developed involving seminars, daily meetings, and prayers for the Holy Spirit.

Next, foundations for spiritual formation were provided in order to understand the critical importance of actively and personally engaging in the process of spiritual formation. A biblical examination of spirituality and a specific call for authentic spirituality was designed for that purpose. The culmination of this first stage was a personal spiritual inventory to help participants examine their own spirituality—their relationship with God, themselves, and with others—and what to do in order to restore those relationships and further nurture them.

As a transition from the first stage of the program to the second stage, two seminars were developed: the first was on worship, and the second on spiritual principles. Two motives stood behind these transitional seminars. First, spiritual life takes place only in the context of worshiping God—spiritual life grows only within an atmosphere of biblical worship. Once a person is taught and motivated to live in an atmosphere of worship and engages in a life of worship, all aspects of his or her life will be positively impacted. In fact, everything in life can become a real act of worship. Human beings belong to God in two ways—through creation and redemption. Therefore, their entire lives should be an act of gratefulness and thankfulness to God expressed by voluntary and joyful worship. Second, spiritual life is secured only within the boundaries of biblical principles.
An additional seminar of twelve spiritual principles was developed to motivate, guide, and protect all actions of life. This seminar was designed in such a way that the participants had an immediate guide and standard for any action. Spiritual life needs elements that are unchanging in order to endure and biblical principles represent such elements. They are eternal and never change, no matter the circumstances or the events of life. Therefore, they became an essential part of the program.

For the second stage of the program, another set of seminars were developed that addressed the practical aspect of the program and the spiritual instruments involved in spiritual growth. After those presentations, participants needed structure and means to make the program real and personal.

This second stage was developed in two phases as well. Since Jesus was the heart of the second stage and the seminars developed, this author presented Jesus as both the One who calls people to a life of spiritual discipleship, and as the perfect example to follow. The restoration of the image of God in human beings and the state of holiness were lifted up as the goal of the program. Jesus' invitation to follow Him and learn from Him was presented as the main motivation and way to pursue a life of holiness and discipleship.

The second phase was also designed for practicing the presence of God through spiritual disciplines—the converging point of the whole program. Spiritual disciplines were introduced by pointing to the example of Jesus, as well as other biblical examples of spiritual men whose lives were characterized by the very spiritual disciplines developed in the program. A set of ten spiritual disciplines were prepared that were classified in three categories. However the basic spiritual disciplines were considered to be prayer,
study, and worship. The second set were witnessing and watchfulness. And the third and final set were meditation, confession, journaling, celebration, and fasting.

These classifications were revealed in the section that dealt with Christ’s spirituality. It was explained there that Christ’s entire ministry flowed out of prayer, study of the Word, and worship. All the other spiritual habits were a result of the first three. Witnessing God, or revealing God’s true character, was chosen as second most important because that was the very mission Jesus came to fulfill. Watchfulness was included because Jesus used this method to keep His mission supreme and His relationship with the Father uninterrupted. Another rationale for the practice of watchfulness presented in the program was because the author considered watchfulness as an undiscovered or neglected discipline among Christians, and not even mentioned as a spiritual discipline in the primary books on spirituality. However, it was considered as secondary in importance because it is developed and empowered by a life of prayer, study, and worship.

One could argue for the exclusive focus on these three rather than adding the remaining seven spiritual disciplines. In reality, practicing the three, leads naturally to experiencing the remaining seven. And since most participants had no training in either category, the author chose to incorporate all ten. People who have never been trained in any of these specific disciplines need to learn and purposefully practice them. Another question may be why were not all the other twenty-two disciplines of spiritual life taught in the program? It was because of time and space as limiting factors.

Seven weeks was considered sufficient time in which a series of ten spiritual disciplines and other spiritual principles could be learned and applied. During this time
the structure of the program centered around the word “prayers.” The word “PRAYERS,” meaning “PRAYER SAVES,” became an acronym that included seven essentials of the spiritual life. These were praying to God, reconciling with God, asking God, yielding to God, exercising faith in God, rejoicing in God, and saved by God. These seven composed the seven elements of a transforming and saving relationship with God by prayer. An important objective in developing such a structure was to help participants understand how vital it is to spend time with God every day, not just occasionally. Also, they would soon learn that it is important not only to enter into the presence of God through short moments of devotional prayer, but to also spend quality time with God until their entire life was marked, changed, transformed, and saved.

Furthermore, the practice of God’s presence was designed to be the core of the entire program. In other words, practicing His presence was designed to so enhance the participants walk with God, that His presence would become a permanent and joyful reality—the source of all relational restoration and the foundation for dynamic, transforming spiritual life. A three step instrument, entitled “God’s presence in my life,” was designed to help the participants trace and review the presence of God in their lives in the past, in the present, and to anticipate God’s presence in the future. The intention was to help participants realize that God had always been present in their past, and that He was interested in playing an active role in their present and future.

To meet the need of remaining in the presence of God after leaving the place of worship or prayer, a concept of God’s presence with seven aspects was developed. They were as follows: seeking God’s presence, developing openness to His presence, being aware of His presence, cultivating a sense of His presence, experiencing His presence,
willingness to follow His will, remaining constantly in His presence, enjoying His presence, and mediating His presence to others. These seven aspects of the presence of God were attached to the seven “prayer saves” structure and were designed to be experienced through the practice of spiritual disciplines.

To complement the ‘seven’s mentioned above, seven prayers of Jesus were selected from the Gospel as material for study and an example to follow. Christ’s spirituality as revealed in the chapters of the Cross (Luke 22-24) were also included as daily and weekly material for study and meditation. This daily habit of focusing on the Cross was intended to become the “one hour of contemplation of the life of Christ,” mentioned by Ellen G. White.1 This special time was to bring participants face to face with the greatest revelation of God’s love, plus facilitate being changed by beholding His great sacrifice.

A further element considered important and added was seven Scripture passages for study and meditation related to the seven elements of the “prayer saves” model. Seven psalms were selected to be memorized and meditated upon, and seven hymns were to be learned and practiced. One of each seven elements was scheduled for each week, and it was recommended to be repeated every day of that week. The spiritual disciplines were also designed to be practiced one per week, and in some cases two, but each one was to be added over the following weeks and continued to be practiced until they became natural habits of their spiritual lives. This would mean that by the seventh week, all spiritual disciplines would be functioning together.

1Ellen White, The Desire of Ages, 83.
In summary, the program design covered seven weeks and included: (1) the “prayer saves” framework with the seven essential elements of devotional life, (2) seven aspects of practicing God’s presence, (3) seven spiritual disciplines (later on other three were added), (4) seven prayers of Jesus recorded in the Gospel, and the chapters of the Cross from Luke 22-24, (5) seven psalms, (6) seven biblical passages, and (7) seven hymns.

All the elements were designed to teach and motivate participants toward pursuing an abundant and genuine spiritual life. A threefold purpose was designed as the ultimate goal of the spiritual formation program. This involved, first, living daily in their own salvation; second, living daily for the salvation of others; and third, living daily for the glory of God.

**Recruiting the Participants**

As noted previously, the opportunity to participate in the program was extended to everyone for about two months. Participants emerged from discussions held in board meetings, personal discussions with church members, announcement information provided on Sabbath morning, bulletin information, and from the five-question survey distributed on Sabbath morning.

The last three questions of this survey pointed to the importance of spiritual formation and an invitation to enroll in the program. The following questions were used: “Do you realize how important it is for you to be an active participant in a spiritual formation program and learn how to keep in touch with Jesus at all times?” “Would you like to attend the sessions of the spiritual program that will take place in our church?” “Are you making the decision right now to enroll in this spiritual formation program?”
Seventeen members signed up on that particular Sabbath, and others enrolled soon thereafter making the complete number enrolled in the program twenty-seven. Seven of these individuals for some reason did not fulfill all the requirements of the study, even though one of them experienced a visible, personal revival. All others attended a significant number of sessions and reported spiritual benefits. Out of the 20 participants who made up the focus group of the program, 8 were men and 12 women. Of these 20, 7 were married and 13 single. Age span was represented by a young lady of 20, 8 participants between 25 and 39, 9 between 40 and 65, and 2 over 66. All of these were baptized Adventists.

Even though eleven board members enrolled in the program, all board members attended some of the sessions. These eleven became the most constant participants in the program. Four elders, the treasurer, clerk, youth director, and personal ministry director were among them. Three of the participants were not members of the North Miami Beach SDA Church with one of them being rebaptized during the program and another transferring membership to the North Miami Beach SDA Church. Once the participants enrolled in the program and received the necessary information, they signed an "informed consent" form and were ready to adopt the schedule for the duration of the program.

**Adopting the Schedule for the Duration of the Program**

Discussions regarding the schedule for the program took place at the first meeting. Time factor, general church programs, the fact that North Miami Beach SDA Church was renting the building from the Methodist Church, possible tension between the programs of the two churches using the same building, and the physical condition of the building all played a determining role in the proposed schedule for the next four
months. After fruitful discussions, it seemed that Friday would be the best option for the weekly meetings. Thus, every Friday evening for the next four months (except for some unexpected events), 7:30-9:00 p.m. was selected.

It should be noted that the initial schedule suffered some required modification over the four months. Due to an evangelistic crusade that began in the church in the beginning of the fourth month of the program, and based on the perceptible need to go deeper and more practical in the process of spiritual formation, another five months were planned and added to the schedule as the second stage of the program. October 2006 through February 2007 was selected and meetings took place weekly on Friday evening, as in the previous stage. The participants perceived this modification as a positive and natural aspect of the process. Another additional element of the program was a weekend seminar in the middle of December 2006, on spiritual formation conducted by Dr. Joseph Kidder from Andrews University. The impact of the seminar upon the church was so influential that the next Friday evening nineteen participants attended and were determined to continue the spiritual formation program to its completion.

During the program there were other necessary schedule adjustments that improved the whole process significantly. Thus, with the approach of an evangelistic crusade, a ten-day time for preparation was scheduled including seminars and prayer for receiving of the Holy Spirit. While for participants, this inclusion was a continuation, for the church as a whole it was a transitional phase toward the evangelistic emphasis.

When the time came for the church to move from the Methodist church to the purchased property, a Sabbath of celebration was organized and a seminar on the spiritual discipline of celebration was distributed to every member. Seminars, on the image of
God, holiness, worship, and spiritual disciplines, were introduced by sermons on Sabbath morning. The seminar on the seven movements of spirituality was first presented to the participants, and afterward repeated in a sermon on Sabbath morning for the entire church.

Presentation of a Series of Seminars on Spiritual Formation

Originally a series of four seminars on spiritual formation were intended to cover the main aspects of the spiritual formation program. However, since the original program expanded from one-stage of four months to a two-stage program with a second stage of five months, the number of the seminars increased significantly.

Due to the large volume of written material presented to the participants, special mention should be made regarding the seminars. First, the seminars were rooted in the biblical and theological concepts that have been developed in chapters 2 and 3. In order to capture a sense of these seminars and avoid repetition and space, brief samples will be given. Second, only five seminars will be presented. Third, all developed seminars will be available in the appendix in their complete form. Following is a brief example of seminar content:

Seminar on Sin and God’s Remedies for Sin

The seminar was developed on Dick Winn’s book, *If God Won the War, Why Isn’t*

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1 A number of other seminars were presented during the program. All the material mentioned in this chapter can be found in appendix C.
At its very core, sin is a problem of relationships—broken relationship between God and His people. Satan can cause or maintain a broken relationship between free thoughtful creatures and their Creator in only one way. And that is to deceive them about the character of their wonderful God. Sin, therefore, has both its origins and continued power in a deception about God. When deception reaches the minds of God’s free creatures and they choose to believe it—the result is a shattered relationship. Trust in God gives way to skepticism, loyalty to rebellion, and intelligent submission to defiant independence. Self destructive behaviors are not the real sin problem. They are but the result. The real sin problem, the very heart of the matter, is a broken faith relationship.

1. Broken Faith Relationship

2. Satan’s deception about God leads to broken faith relationship

3. Broken relationship produces three main results:
   a. Guilt, deserving the second death
   b. Selfish character and values
   c. Sinful flesh, the sin damaged body

4. God’s Remedies for the Broken Relationship
   a. The Truth about God revealed in the life and death of Jesus

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3Dick Winn, If God Won the War, Why Isn’t it Over (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1982).

4See Dybdahl, class notes, Spiritual and Theological Basis for Ministry.

5Ellen White, The Desire of Ages, 662-680.
The Truth about God in Jesus’ life and death produces faith.

b. Faith: reconciled to God in love trust and obedience

5. Faith produces three main results:
   a. Justification—pardon, viewed as righteous, accepted in Christ
   b. A new heart that loves righteousness and hates sin
   c. A new Spirit—controlled by the new Spirit-led mind

The second set of four seminars laid out the foundations for spiritual formation. The purpose was to introduce the participants to the concepts of spiritual formation and thus prepare them for the practical steps that would take place later in the program. These seminars were built on Ben Maxson’s excellent views presented in *Principles of Stewardship*. Biblical concepts about spirituality were given, the concept of God’s presence was introduced, and a call to pursue authentic spirituality was made so that participants would understand both the concepts and their personal responsibility in pursuing a spiritual life. Following is a sample of those themes.

**Seminar on Spirituality—Biblical Concepts**

I. Defining Spirituality

Spirituality is a restored relationship with God by faith in Jesus’ atoning sacrifice, under the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the human heart, and is nurtured and developed upon (and within) the Word of God (in the context of the real life) and through the practice of spiritual disciplines. It can be seen also as “the quality of life generated and nourished by the Spirit of God, in which the believers experience the power and

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6See appendix C.
presence of God in their lives. True spirituality comes from living under the control of the Holy Spirit and is evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit, spiritual maturity, and growth in holiness.”

II. Biblical Concepts

A. Need for spiritual renewal (1 Cor 2:14; Rom 7:14; Jude 19)

B. Christians have been renewed spiritually (John 3:5-8; Rom 8:11; Tit 3:5)

C. Faith (Heb 11:6; John 53-58; 14:1; 20:31; Acts 16:31; Rom 10:9-10)

D. Longing for God (Ps 27:8; 42:1-3; 119:2; 143:5-6; Phil 3:10-14)

III. Nature of Spirituality

A. Living under the Spirit's control (Rom 8:5-9; Rom 8:12-13; Gal 5:16-17)

B. Reflecting Christ's character (2 Cor 3:18; Rom 8:29; 1 John 3:2-3)

C. Fellowship with God through the Spirit (Rom 8:14-16; Gal 4:6)

D. Living in God’s presence (Ps 16:8; Ps 27:8-9; Isa 25:3; Ps 51:11)

IV. Evidence of Spirituality

A. Bearing fruit (Gal 5:22-23; Matt 7:17; John 15:5-8; Rom 14:17)

B. Love for one another (1 John 4:7; John 13:34-35; 1 Cor 13:1-8; Col 3:12)

C. Spiritual maturity (1 Cor 3:1-3; 14-20; Heb 5:13-14)

D. Showing concern for the weak in faith (Gal 6:1; Rom 14:1-3, 19-21)

E. Understanding spiritual truths (1 Cor 2:9-13; John 14:17; 16:13-15)

F. Holiness (Tit 2:12; Rom 12:1-2; 1 Cor 6:19-20; Gal 5:24; Col 3:1-2)

G. Obedience (John 15:10; 1 John 2:2-6; 5:2-3)

7McGrath, The NIV Thematic Reference Bible, 164-165.
V. Aids to Spirituality

A. Cooperation with the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:25; Acts 7:5; Eph 4:30)

B. Meditation on God’s Word (Josh 1:8; John 17:7; 2 Tim 3:15-17)

C. Spending time with God (Luke 6:12; Mark 1:35; Acts 4:13)

D. Encouragement of others (Heb 10:24; Col 3:16; 1 Thess 2:11-12)

E. Tests and trials (Jas 1:2-4; Rom 5:3-4; 1 Pet 1:6-7)

VI. Examples of Spirituality

Enoch (Gen 5:24), Noah (Gen 6:9), Moses (Num 12:3, 6-8), David (1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22), Stephan (Acts 6:5-8), Barnabas (Acts 11:24). See also the whole list of the heroes of faith in Heb 11.

Seminar on Prayer Saves Model

The life of Jesus was an ongoing relationship with the Father, was fed on the Word of God, centered on God’s immutable principles, and nurtured by the practice of spiritual disciplines. The following three samples of seminars address the devotional life around prayer, the spiritual principles on which life is to be centered, and the discipline of watchfulness, which is one of the ten disciplines presented. The seven-week period for practicing the presence of God by the use of spiritual disciplines was structured on the acronym “Prayers” which became the “Prayer Saves” model.

P
R
A
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S A V E S

182
I. Praying to God

A. Seeking God's Presence
   1. Seeking God—seek Him with all your heart to know Him personally.
   2. Openness to His Presence—develop openness to His coming into your life.
   3. Listening—listen to His voice as He speaks through His Word, and His Spirit.

B. Worshiping God
   1. Praise—praise Him for who He is: Focus on His character
   2. Adoration—adore Him for His holiness, divinity, and majesty
   3. Thanksgiving—thank Him for His wonderful love and for what He has done for you.

II. Reconciling with God—being aware of His presence

A. Reexamination of your relationship with God, with yourself and with others

B. Repentance
   1. Look to the Law of God as to a mirror and let the Holy Spirit show you the truth about yourself.
   2. Look at the Cross and allow The Holy Spirit to reveal to you the depth of God's love and the meaning and purpose of Jesus' Sacrifice.
   3. Accept Jesus as your personal Savior - Under the influence of the Holy Spirit surrender to God in confession, repentance, and accept His forgiveness.

Recommitment
   1. Turn your life over to God to live for His Glory.
   2. Renew your commitment to Him—a new covenant.
   3. Focus on the Word, on the life of Christ, and submit to the Holy Spirit in order to live a life of peace with God and with others.

III. Asking God—cultivating a sense of His presence—experiencing His presence

A. Ask the Lord to fully restore, deepen, and sanctify all of your relationships.
B. Ask the Lord to meet all your needs.
C. Ask God to fulfill His promises and fill you with His Spirit.
D. Ask God for others—intercessory prayer.
IV. Yielding to God in love and obedience—willingness to follow His will
   A. Yield to God your entire life to become a new creation.
   B. Yield to God all you are and have; your times, plans, brokenness and energies.
   C. Yield to God’s Holy Spirit to become His holy temple.
   D. Yield to God’s will in full obedience to Him.

V. Exercising faith in God—remaining constantly in His presence
   A. Faith in His Word and His promises
   B. Faith in His plan of salvation
   C. Faith in His presence in your life

VI. Rejoicing in God—enjoying His presence
   A. Learn to experience God’s presence
      Accept and experience His Presence in your life by an act of active faith:
         Through His Word
         Through His Spirit
         Through His angels
         Through His children
         Through prayer and other spiritual practices
   B. Remain in God’s presence throughout the day by practicing the spiritual disciplines of prayer, study, meditation, confession, fasting, journaling, witnessing, celebration, worship, watchfulness, etc.

VII. Salvation by God’s presence—having his presence in you “Christ in you the hope of glory,” and mediating His presence to others

   A Simple Plan for Life
   A. Live every day within God’s grace to experience salvation.
   B. Live every day for the salvation of others.
   C. Live every day for the glory of God.

The purpose of this structure was to eventually become a daily outline for the prayer life of the participants in which seven aspects of Christian life were addressed. For the next seven weeks, one aspect per week was to be experienced until the seventh week when all seven were to be part of the devotional time with God in prayer and study of the Word. Every week a spiritual discipline was also added for practice. The goal was that
after the seventh week the model would be integrated as a natural part of the devotional life and followed every day. As noticed, the seventh aspect is salvation that is to be the fruit of the true devotion to God and is suggested to be pursued and experienced daily.

Seminar on Twelve Dynamic Principles of Spiritual Life


5. The Principle of Reciprocity: “Whatever you do to others, do it for their good” (Matt 7:12).


7. The Principle of Thanksgiving: “Whatever God asks you to do, do it with thanksgiving and without complaining or arguing...” (Phil 2:14; Col 3:17).

8. The Principle of Total Involvement: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart” (Col 3:23).


"Watchfulness is the state of being alert and expectant; watching over someone in one's care or waiting for the arrival of someone important or for some significant event. Scripture lays particular emphasis on the need to watch for the second coming of Jesus Christ."\(^8\)

Jesus did three important things to help His disciples understand the meaning and importance of watchfulness:

1. He asked His disciples to watch (Matt 26:40-41).
3. He took them with Him and showed them how to watch (Matt 26:36-46).\(^9\)

Watchfulness is God's plan and His request for His children (Isa 62:6-7; Matt 26:31).

Watchfulness for Dangers (1 Pet 5:8; Prov 4:23).

1. The danger of false teachers or false teaching (Matt 7:15; 24:4; Mark 8:15).
3. The danger of neglecting the Word of God (Deut 4:9; Josh 22:5; Heb 2:1).
4. The danger of damage to the Lord's work (Neh 4:9; 7:3).
5. The danger of speaking sinfully (Ps 39:1; 141:3; Prov 13:3; 21:23; 1 Pet 3:10).

Watchfulness for blessings (Ps 59:9; Ps 130:5-6; Mic 7:7; Luke 2:25, 36-38).

Watchfulness and prayer (Col 4:2-3; Matt 26:41; Mark 14:38; Luke 21:36; Eph 6:18).

\(^8\)McGrath, The NIV Thematic Reference Bible, 2023.

Watchfulness for opportunities to serve the Lord (1 Pet 3:15; Eph 5:15-16; Col 4:5-6).
Watchfulness for opportunities to serve others (Eph 6:18; Matt 26:36-40; Gal 6:10).
Warning against neglect of watchfulness (Rev 3:2-3).
Watchfulness for the return of Jesus Christ (Matt 24:42-44; 25:1-13; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 12:35-40; 1 Thess 5:4-8; Rev 16:15). To keep watch for the return of Jesus means to be ready for His coming.

Summary

This chapter dealt with the development and implementation of the spiritual formation program in the North Miami Beach SDA Church. The development of the seminars, the process of recruiting participants, and the presentations of a series of seminars on spiritual formation were all included in the body of this chapter. The evaluation of the program comes next in Chapter 6 and the conclusions and recommendations in chapter 7.

At the end of the spiritual formation program in the North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church, participants were invited to continue the process of spiritual growth. A plan, based upon the Gospel and the book The Desire of Ages, entitled “One Hour with Jesus” was suggested. Participants were advised to continue to practice the spiritual disciplines and principles they had learned and to encourage other church members to be involved in the “One Hour with Jesus” concept. This new plan, meant for the remainder of the year, was inspired by the words of Jesus, “Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?” (Matt 26:40); and by Ellen G White’s counsel, “It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the
closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{10}Ellen White, \textit{The Desire of Ages}, 83.
CHAPTER 6

EVALUATION OF THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION PROGRAM

Introduction

This chapter deals with the evaluation of participants in the spiritual formation program. As specified previously, the main instrument selected for evaluation was the Christian Spiritual Participation Profile created by Dr. Jane Thayer from Andrews University. This evaluation identifies the changes in averages between pre and post test. To the fifty questions of the Christian Spiritual Participation Profile which cover the main relationships of spiritual life and the impact of spiritual disciplines upon those relationships, another group of twenty-seven questions were added to address specifically the practice of the presence of God, the participants' personal experiences and reflections as a result of participating in the program, and their personal commitments. Specifically, the program was classified into five main divisions: (1) evaluating the practice of spiritual disciplines, (2) evaluating the effects of spiritual disciplines upon the main relationships, (3) practicing the presence of God, (4) participants' personal reflections and experiences, and (5) personal commitments.

It should be noted that out of the original twenty members registered for study, sixteen participated in the evaluation process. They met the criteria while the other four did not. To be more specific: participant 0001 attended only the last part of the program, participant 0019 had been sick over the entire period of the program and missed more
than 80 percent of the meetings, participant 0026—a student, attended too irregularly and missed a significant number of fundamental meetings, and participant 0029 had a similar experience.

**Evaluating the Practice of Spiritual Disciplines**

Based on the Christian Spiritual Participation Profile, which will be explained in the next section, the data was reviewed regarding the practice of the spiritual disciplines. The evaluation of participants shows that out of the 16 participants in the program, 10 increased in the *Prayer* category while 4 decreased and 2 remained the same. In the *Repentance* category, 12 increased, while 2 decreased and 2 remained the same. In the *Worship* category, 8 increased, 2 decreased, and 6 remained the same. In the *Bible Reading* category, 12 increased, and 4 decreased. In the *Meditation* category, 9 increased, 1 decreased and 6 remained the same. In the *Examination of Conscience* category, 9 increased, 5 decreased, and 2 remained the same. In the *Evangelism* category, 13 increased, 2 decreased and 1 remained the same. In the *Fellowship* category, 11 increased, 3 decreased, and 2 remained the same. In the *Service* category, 12 increased, and 4 decreased. In the *Stewardship* category, 10 increased, while 4 decreased, and 2 remained the same. In the final evaluation of the study, it should be noted that three particular cases (0004, 0005 and 0008) bring inconclusive data to the study due to the fact that they failed to attend much of the program.

The following table reports both the individual and group changes in practicing the spiritual disciplines between pre- and post-test and the difference in average between the two.
TABLE 1
Evaluating the Practice of Spiritual Disciplines—Total Averages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Total Pre-test</th>
<th>Total Post-test</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case 0002</td>
<td>2.774</td>
<td>3.801</td>
<td>+1.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0003</td>
<td>2.973</td>
<td>3.336</td>
<td>+0.363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0004</td>
<td>4.095</td>
<td>4.194</td>
<td>+0.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0005</td>
<td>3.778</td>
<td>3.659</td>
<td>-0.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0006</td>
<td>3.377</td>
<td>4.576</td>
<td>+1.199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0007</td>
<td>4.376</td>
<td>4.771</td>
<td>+0.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0008</td>
<td>4.430</td>
<td>4.122</td>
<td>-0.308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0009</td>
<td>4.288</td>
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<td>+0.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0010</td>
<td>3.967</td>
<td>4.447</td>
<td>+0.480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0011</td>
<td>3.017</td>
<td>4.102</td>
<td>+1.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0012</td>
<td>4.562</td>
<td>4.711</td>
<td>+0.149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0017</td>
<td>3.476</td>
<td>3.591</td>
<td>+0.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0017</td>
<td>4.282</td>
<td>4.596</td>
<td>+0.314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0022</td>
<td>2.662</td>
<td>3.628</td>
<td>+0.966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0025</td>
<td>3.399</td>
<td>3.830</td>
<td>+0.431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 0028</td>
<td>4.045</td>
<td>4.439</td>
<td>+0.394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Averages:</td>
<td>3.719</td>
<td>4.143</td>
<td>+0.424</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the evaluation indicate an increase in the use of all spiritual disciplines recommended in the program. A satisfying trend can be easily seen. The majority of participants record the highest score in Bible reading, repentance, service, and evangelism, bringing a great sense of satisfaction to the researcher. Since the goal of the church is reaching out to the lost, the best way to equip members to accomplish this goal is by connecting them to God through the Bible, repentance, and a life of service. With two exceptions, the above table indicates solid growth in these targeted areas.

1An individual score and a detailed evaluation of participants are available in appendix B.
Evaluating the Effects of Spiritual Disciplines upon the Main Relationships

The Christian Spiritual Profile (CSPP) instrument used to evaluate the practice of the spiritual disciplines and their impact on the main relationships of spiritual life, measures the intensity of a person’s involvement in a process that leads to desirable spiritual change. The CSPP contains 50 items from ten spiritual disciplines and produces four scores, one score for each spiritual development category. Participants rated their responses on a scale of 0 to 5; 0 being “Never,” 1 being “Very Rarely,” 2 being “Rarely,” 3 being “Occasionally,” 4 being “Frequently,” and 5 being “Very Frequently.”

The CSPP reports on the frequency and depth of people’s participation in ten basic Christian disciplines: Worship, prayer, repentance, meditation, examination of conscience, Bible study/reading, fellowship, service, evangelism, and stewardship. The personal profile has two sections: (1) the practice of spiritual disciplines, and (2) the spiritual disciplines organized into four basic relationships of spiritual growth. These are: Growing Through My Relationship with God; Growing Through the Word; Growing Through My Relationship with Others; and Growing Through Critical Reflection.

The spiritual disciplines have been classified according to the primary relational mode of spiritual growing that they use. The scale for Growing Through My Relationship with God measures the concrete experience approach. Disciplines associated primarily with this way of spiritual growth are worship, prayer, and repentance. The scale for

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3See the fifty questions of CSPP in appendix B.
*Growing Through the Word* measures the abstract conceptualization mode. Disciplines associated primarily with this way are Bible reading/study and meditation. The scale for *Growing Through My Relationship with Others* measures the active experimentation approach. Disciplines associated primarily with this category are evangelism, fellowship, service, and stewardship. The scale for *Growing through Critical Reflection* measures the reflective observation approach. The discipline associated primarily with this approach is examination of conscience. Surely, in this category, meditation and repentance, based upon devotional Bible study, are inevitably present.

The profiles on the next two pages show the changes in averages per the total number of participants between the pre- and post-test. They cover both evaluation of the practice of the spiritual disciplines and their influence upon the four basic relationships of spiritual growth.

The line graph at the bottom of the Profile shows the relative frequency of people’s participation in the ten disciplines. For example, one can see how much he participated in prayer as compared with service or any other discipline.

The four-sided figure at the top of the Profile shows the effect of practicing the spiritual disciplines in the four basic spiritual relationships of spiritual growth. The four relational ways of spiritual growth provide the basis for holistic spiritual development.4 The more nearly square the four-sided figure is, the more balanced is their use of the four

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4*Through concrete experience, spiritual knowledge is grasped by the personal experience of relating to God; through abstract conceptualization, it is grasped by abstract symbols of language in reading and hearing both the Scriptures and testimonies of other’s experiences. Through reflective observation, spiritual knowledge is transformed into learning by critical reflection; through active experimentation, it is transformed into learning by praxis.”* Thayer, 196.
relational approaches of spiritual growth. The bigger the figure the more depth they have in their use of the four spiritual approaches.
Figure 1. Christian Spiritual Participation Profile—Pre-test
Christian Spiritual Participation Profile

Total Posttest

Growing through my relationship with others

Growing through the Word

Growing through critical reflection

Figure 2. Christian Spiritual Participation Profile–Post-test
Out of the sixteen participants whose results were evaluated, 15 increased in the *Growing Through My Relationship with God* Category, while 1 remained the same, but it should be noted that this participant was at the top ("Very Frequently") of the scale in both the pre and post surveys. In the *Growing Through the Word* Category, 12 increased, while 4 decreased. In the *Growing Through My Relationship with Others* Category, 13 increased, 1 decreased, and 2 remained the same. In the *Growing Through Critical Reflection* Category 10 increased, 4 decreased, and 2 remained the same, but it should be noted that one of the two that remained the same was at the top ("Very Frequently") of the scale in both the pre and post surveys. In the final evaluation of the study, it should be noted that three particular cases (0004, 0005, and 0008) bring inconclusive data to the study due to the fact that they failed to attend much of the program.

The study brings clear evidence that practicing spiritual disciplines makes all the difference in spiritual growth through the main relationships of life. As noted above, the highest score was recorded in the area where it should be—*Growing Through My Relationship with God*. There is no decrease at all in this category. The natural and expected result can be seen in the *Growing Through My Relationship with Others* Category, where 13 participants increased their experience, 2 remained the same, and only 1 decreased. Such results illustrate that when one grows in his relationship with God, he or she will automatically grow in relationship with others. Based upon the results in the *Growing Through Critical Reflection* Category, some participants need to practice more consistently those disciplines which will enhance their critical reflection.
Evaluating the Practice of God's Presence

This section sought to examine the impact of the program upon the participants as reflected in their own perception of practicing God's presence in their lives. This is different from the previous section where participants were evaluated based on CSPP—an existing instrument. This part of the survey contained fourteen questions (51-64). In the first seven questions (51-57) participants rated their responses on a scale of 0 to 5; 0 being "Never," 1 being "Very Rarely," 2 being "Rarely," 3 being "Occasionally," 4 being "Frequently," and 5 being "Very Frequently." In the remaining seven questions (58-64), participants answered on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being "Strongly Disagree," 1 being "Disagree," 2 being "Neutral," 3 being "Agree," and 4 being "Strongly Agree." Below are four bar graphs that summarize the responses to each question, both before and after the program.5

5Also Survey Results Chart for Questions 51-64 is in appendix B.
Responses to Questions 51-57 Before the Program

51. I have a sense of God's presence in my life.

52. After my devotional time in the morning I take God with me wherever I go.

53. When I am in nature I have a special sense of God's presence in my life.

54. I am aware of God's presence in my life throughout the day.

55. I am open to God's presence throughout the day.

56. I am willing to live in God's presence throughout the day.

57. I am mediating God's presence to others throughout the day.
Responses to Questions 51-57 After the Program

51. I have a sense of God's presence in my life.

52. After my devotional time in the morning I take God with me wherever I go.

53. When I am in nature I have a special sense of God's presence in my life.

54. I am aware of God's presence in my life throughout the day.

55. I am open to God's presence throughout the day.

56. I am willing to live in God's presence throughout the day.

57. I am mediating God's presence to others throughout the day.
Responses to Questions 58-64 Before the Program

58. My main focus in life is to know God and to live in His presence.

59. I know how to practice the presence of God all day long.

60. When I practice the spiritual disciplines, my goal is to restore my relationship with God and have an ongoing connection to Him.

61. When spending time with God in prayer, Bible study, meditation, and other spiritual disciplines, my attitude towards God/myself/others are changed.

62. Based on my daily spiritual practices (so far) I see myself as a precious child of God and I'm happy about this fact.

63. Based on my relationship with God, my relationship with others is constantly good.

64. I regard nature as God's wonderful gift for my happiness.
Responses to Questions 58-64 After the Program

58. My main focus in life is to know God and to live in His presence.

59. I know how to practice the presence of God all day long.

60. When I practice the spiritual disciplines, my goal is to restore my relationship with God and have an ongoing connection to Him.

61. When spending time with God in prayer, Bible study, meditation, and other spiritual disciplines, my attitude towards God/myself/others are changed.

62. Based on my daily spiritual practices (so far) I see myself as a precious child of God and I’m happy about this fact.

63. Based on my relationship with God, my relationship with others is constantly good.

64. I regard nature as God’s wonderful gift for my happiness.
Surprisingly, these results do not show an increase in practicing the presence of God, as expected. The author was puzzled by this outcome. All other evaluations including using CSPP, the four open-ended questions at the end of the program, and participants’ personal testimonies indicated that the practice of God’s presence through the use of spiritual disciplines made a significantly positive impact. While this evaluation did not show a regress, it seemed to show more of a stagnation.

Four factors could explain this. First, the survey targeted more the emotional side of their experience than the concrete. The words, “I have a sense,” “I am aware,” “I am open,” etc., point to something which is very difficult to measure objectively. Second, the participants began very high on the scale of their walk with God. This either proves that they had quite a positive experience in cultivating God’s presence or that they realized—at the end of the program—that to walk daily with God was more than they believed and experienced. Thus, they were more exigent with themselves.

Third, perhaps a better formulation of those questions would have made the evaluation clearer. Fourth, some participants, especially the older, could have misinterpreted the survey. One particular Spanish participant (Case 0011), scored “1” Strongly disagree, on the last seven questions of the survey (questions 58-64—after the program). When asked, the participant recognized that somehow she did not give careful attention to the questions and thus her answers were inaccurate. In reality she meant to score “5,” because she strongly agreed with all the questions.

Evaluating Participants’ Personal Reflections—Experiences

To examine the impact of the program on the thinking of participants and their accumulated experiences, four open-ended questions were asked, giving each participant

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the opportunity to answer according to their particular experience.

Question #72 was: “What has been the most important change in your life as a result of the spiritual formation program?” Most of the participants responded to this question in the same tone:

“A much more devoted life to God and to others. A sense of God’s presence in my life.”
“Stay in constant connection with God.”
“I am spending more time meditating on spiritual matters…”
“I think more about Jesus. Meditate more on God’s word, pray more. I study God’s word more an more.”
“Knowing how to be close to God.”
“The knowledge of God’s need for me to be saved in His kingdom.”
“I no longer have a sense of void, but a fulfilling heart.”
“I would like to share my life with others more.”
“It urges me to get right with God.”
“How to have a more rich and wonderful devotion time with God.”
“Is to know that I was able to forgive the person or persons who have hurt me the most in my life.”
“I have been more aware of my need to know God more and to develop my relationship with Him.”

Almost in one voice, the participants are revealing their soul need for knowing God both in their inward parts and in their relationship with others. This desire to know God seems to be shown in meditation, prayer, sharing, and a greater amount of time in devotion.

Question #73 was open-ended and asked: “What has been the most profound spiritual experience during this program?” A wide range of answers were given to this question:

“Since the program was initiated I have seen God’s presence in my life.”
“To be so close to God also to see people give their life to God.”
“Reading material about how to become spiritually full in our Lord Savior Jesus Christ.”
“The spiritual experience is that the program has been a blessing to be closer to God.”
“Staying spiritual at all time.”
“I now know that God listens and He cares.”
“The assurance of God’s love for all mankind.”
“Knowing how wonderful it is to be in God’s presence.”
“Realizing that I need to make a conservative effort to meditate on the death and sacrifice of the Cross.”
“I feel God’s presence in my life more and more. I appreciate His love and sacrifice much more than before.”
“Learning how to journal my experience walking with the Lord.”
“Change on my life.”
“A pressing need of God in my life. I feel I’m nothing, absolute nothing without Him.”
“The determination of the pastor.”

The goal of the program, i.e., to help the participants to have a meaningful relationship with God, to experience His presence, and to grow spiritually, seems to have been accomplished. Participants understood that a life of meaning and sense, a life of joy and peace, comes only as a result of true communion with God. Therefore the majority of participants answered that indeed, they had begun to experience a closer walk with God.

Question #74: “What are the new spiritual disciplines (practices) you learned and integrated already into your spiritual life”? Answers to this open-ended question revealed a variety of results—some of them unexpected. For example, some of the participants mentioned study as being a new spiritual discipline they learned. This was puzzling, given the fact that Bible study is one of the first spiritual disciplines new Christians learn.

Note the responses:

“To study the Bible.”
“Daily devotion: study the Bible, meditate, pray constantly…”
“Have a new thought. Try to be wise.”
“Meditation, fasting and solitude.”
“Communication with God as with a friend. Meditation. I am more aware of His presence in my life.”
“I learned the need to devote morning time to God.”
“Tell others about Jesus.”
“How to take control of my time with God.”
“To sing songs from the hymnal to listen to the words and to meditate on the words.”
"Earnest devotion, and intercessory prayer."
"Take more time to read the Scripture, meditation."
"How to spend quality time with God. How to reach into the root of the life of Jesus and study the Cross."
"How to dress myself. Places I should not go. Things I should not eat. How I should really reach out and help those who are really in need."
"Including God in all things, from the tiniest to the greatest. He loves to be included in every aspect in our lives."

Such responses indicate that a devotional life was positively affected by the practice of new spiritual disciplines. Disciplines such as meditation, study, fasting, solitude, intercessory prayer, prayer or "communication with God as with a friend," and witnessing were frequently mentioned. Though these disciplines are not new for a mature Christian, they seemed new for the participants, or perhaps the participants' emphasis on these disciplines was new. The spiritual disciplines of journaling, watching, worship, and celebration were not mentioned at all.

Question #75 was another open-ended question: "What do you feel you still need to work on?" This question brought participants to the point where they recognized some of the missing disciplines of a spiritual life. The variety of their answers include:

"Organize my life so I can have morning worships."
"My relationship with God."
"Everything."
"Spending time with God."
"I need to work on getting a closer relationship with Jesus my Savior. Need to pray more, spend more time with others teaching them God's work."
"My daily walk with the Lord so I will be stronger with Him every day."
"I feel I need to work more on evangelizing the world."
"Meditation aspect of my life."
"On my devotional time and to put God first not when I remember."
"Self discipline—more time spent with reading and praying."
"Spending more time with God."
"I need to work on journaling. I also need to spend more time not only reading the Bible but other inspired writings."
"To go to God for guidance for decisions. Be more patient. Get less angry."
"I need to make the time to study, pray, and meditate more than 30 minutes a day."
"To be closer to God."
"More dependent upon the Lord. Be persuaded that the Lord forgives my sins when I repent and ask for forgiveness."
"To understand God’s will and when He speaks to me."

Commitment to Continuing the Process of Spiritual Formation

When asked if they would personally commit to continuing the spiritual model experienced during the program, eighteen out of twenty participants responded “yes”, with two not responding. The positive impact of the program upon the participants was also demonstrated by their positive response to the statement requesting a decision to remain in the process of spiritual formation. Such a commitment indicates that spiritual formation was considered a serious priority in their Christian life. After nine months of meetings, seminars, sermons, discussions, and spiritual experiences, such commitment to continuing the process was most heartening to the author. Could this be the first baby steps to a personal spiritual revival in their lives? Hopefully, yes.

Commitment to Introducing Others to the Process of Spiritual Formation

The last statement of the survey, “I commit myself to introducing others to the spiritual formation program,” gave the participants the opportunity to show how important the program was for them and how much they desired to be an instrument in promoting the same experience to other members. The statement was a declaration of intent to participate in the process of making spiritual disciples. Fifteen participants committed themselves to introducing others to the process of spiritual formation, two responded “no,” and three did not respond to the question.
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This project has examined the history of North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church and its current spiritual needs: spiritual formation, biblical and theological foundations, and literature review, with a program design and implementation for a focus group of twenty church members.

Summary

In reviewing the history of North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church (chapter 4), it was discovered that since the first steps for the establishment of a new church in 1986, there had been no intentional and systematic spiritual formation program. The effect of that void began to be felt both on the individual and corporate level of the church. An assessment of the current spiritual profile and needs of church members, along with personal discussions with long-term members, confirmed the finding. The conclusion was obvious. An intentional, spiritual formation program was essential for the growth and spiritual maturity of the church. The development and evaluation of a project to meet this need has been the focus of this report.

Conclusions

Following are the project conclusions drawn from the program design, its implementation and evaluation, and personal observations.
1. This program attempted to address the serious need of North Miami Beach SDA Church members for spiritual formation and for an authentic relationship with God. The most important assumption that stands behind all the research, efforts, and materials involved in this project, was that if church members were taught how to develop a permanent relationship with God, and how to practice His presence through spiritual disciplines on a daily basis, their whole life would be positively changed and in turn, will impact the entire life and mission of the church. Based on program evaluation, the personal testimonies of most participants, and some of the results in the life of the church, our assumption proved true. Positive changes have already become visible, while others will hopefully come soon.

2. Church elders, board members, other church member participants, whether old or young, male or female, new in the faith or not—all expressed interest in the program and demonstrated support. With more than half of the participants being board members, the direction for the future of the church for coming years is very hopeful.

3. The expectation that the spiritual formation program would enhance the spiritual life of church members and help them cultivate a sense of God’s daily presence was correct. The results of the evaluation certify this, with at least one participant joyfully declaring, "Since I attended the spiritual formation program, I happened to wake up praying to the Lord." It is the hope of the researcher that this humble attempt to introduce his church members to a process of spiritual formation has not only taught them how to live a life with God, but will likewise transform them into successful agents of mediating the presence of God to others.

4. The supposition that lack of specific and systematic spiritual emphasis over the
years was one of the main causes of unfulfilled spiritual dreams and unfulfilled mission, was also correct. Along with that, the expectation that enrollment of members in a spiritual formation program would positively affect all aspects of church life and its main mission, was justified as well. There are three examples:

First, though the North Miami Beach SDA Church moved from a rented place with poor conditions to a tent on its own property with even greater inadequate conditions, no church member moved to other nearby churches with better facilities.

Second, the church family appears more motivated and determined than ever, to meet all the challenges associated with their dream to have their own church building. Participants in the program intermix with each other in sharing this spirit.

Third, the most evident example—evangelism: From the fall of 2005, when the spiritual formation program began, to the Spring of 2007 when it ended, twenty-eight persons were baptized in the church, and two were added by profession of faith. Additionally, two more were baptized at another Seventh-day Adventist church closer to their house as a result of attending the evangelistic meetings at North Miami Beach Church and the relationships they developed with these church members. These baptisms are nearly equal to the number of baptisms recorded in the previous seven years between 1998 and 2005. Though this spiritual harvest represents the combined results of two evangelistic crusades occurring during the two stages of the spiritual formation program, all the results should be credited to the work of the Holy Spirit and to the evangelists who held the meetings. It is believed that the participants in the spiritual formation program

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1Official membership records are held at the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. They are also available to the local church through the local church clerk, Albeitha Tuit. The numbers reflect Albeitha Tuit's clerk report.
and the resulting spiritual atmosphere that surrounded those evangelistic meetings played their particular role in the results.

5. The author's expectations ran high as the spiritual formation program was launched in the Fall of 2005. It was hoped that this would be the first delicate step toward something spreading over the whole North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church in the next few years. The author was, and remains, totally convinced that this had to be the first priority before the church could move forward toward the fulfillment of its original dreams and goals. But he was little aware of how much of his time, research, and effort would be necessary to attempt to get the program accomplished.

6. Inadequate conditions for holding the seminars, the stress of moving to an even less appropriate facility, and other unexpected events or unpleasant interruptions can make a program a total failure no matter how well it was prepared. Ministering between two churches while facing other challenges can have a negative impact on the health of the program. However, in spite of all these, the program was finished, and participants continue to recognize the blessings they received and express the desire to follow up with the new spiritual guidelines. A large number of participants share the desire to start small groups in which to continue the process of spiritual formation.

7. The program has surfaced the important truth that spiritual life does not depend primarily on the spiritual activities of the church, but on the development of a personal relationship with God through the practice of spiritual disciplines within the Word of God. Helping people to learn how to encounter God and maintain a living relationship with Him, in their homes, at their work place, or on the road, is more important than great sermons or public spiritual events. When such people do engage in church worship
services or other spiritual projects, they bring into the body of Christ a new life that contributes and benefits other people. Thus, often unaware, they mediate the presence of God.

8. At the end of the program participants are characterized by a new mindset. The concept of spirituality, with its specific emphasis on spiritual formation and the mission of the church, are considered of maximum importance by the participants. There is a feeling that the Christian life means far more than going to church, resting on Sabbath, paying tithe, and routinely reading the Bible. Participants believe that the Christian life means to follow Christ as personal Lord and Savior as did His disciples. It means to live a life in the presence of God and for His glory. It means daily growth in the knowledge of God and His grace by practicing the disciplines of spiritual life. It means living a life of self-sacrificing love for the salvation of others. When this understanding is shared by most church members, and there is a determination to engage in such a spiritual life, it is highly likely a spiritual revival will spread over the entire congregation and great things will happen.

9. This program helped the author to decide to personally pursue a deeper and more meaningful spiritual life. Although his life since he became a Seventh-day Adventist Christian has been characterized by a constant quest for spirituality, and his passion in ministry has been to lead others on the path of a personal and devotional relationship with God, the author recognizes, at the end of the program, that he is only at the beginning of this wonderful process. He has been humbled to discover how many other children of God from different ages and different Christian perspectives are far ahead of him on the way to spiritual quest. He has been amazed to see how much those
Christians have advanced in the secrets of spiritual things, that they can teach him great and indispensable lessons for his own spirituality. The author has been also pleasantly surprised to discover a number of Seventh-day Adventist writers who focus on spirituality, and whose writings are not at all inferior to those of other great Christian writers.

It is obvious that by being exposed to such a great “cloud of witnesses,” by doing the research, by teaching, and by applying biblical teachings in his own life, the author’s life and ministry as a whole has great opportunity to significantly improve and never be the same. The author has never found himself further from the ideal of spirituality, and yet closer in his desire and commitment to live a life totally consecrated to God. The days and months of research, preparation, teaching, and writing have been characterized by moments of unceasing effort with “dry days” followed by abounding grace, with moments of deep discouragement, and times of comforting hope, with thoughts of incompetence and inadequacy combined with a sense of calling to another level of ministry, of feelings of failure followed by tears of hope produced by divine promises. All these make up the character of a sinful person who has been saved by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and honored to approach the unapproachable and write about the most important topic in life—the dimensions of spirituality, or of the life with God.

As result of this, the author has a new mission statement with only two goals for the rest of his life. First, to continually advance in spirituality, living in the presence of God every day, and living only for His glory. Second, to mediate God’s presence to others and lead them on a similar path toward spiritual fulfillment. The author hopes that this quest will never end on this earth, but continue until one day, he will have the
unspeakable joy and honor to walk side by side with the Source and Author of spiritual life and begin the advanced course of spiritual formation.

Recommendations

Based upon research, program design, its implementation and evaluation, personal discussions with participants in the program, and also personal observations, the author recommends the following:

For Future Research

1. Though the entire program has its foundations deeply rooted in the Bible, this divine source has not been exhaustively plummeted. Spirituality is the main theme of the Bible, and certainly there are more dimensions to be revealed and more depths to explore. Therefore, it is recommended that future research be done specifically related to the growth of spiritual life and the methods recommended by the Word of God for spiritual growth.

2. The Ellen G. White writings endorse every biblical teaching on spirituality. Not only did she write about spiritual matters—much ahead of great contemporary writers—but her writings are far more advanced in spiritual insights than most literature. While Ellen White was quoted in this paper, it is assumed that her writings have more to offer. Therefore, a recommendation is made that further and special study of Ellen G. White’s writings be done particularly in the area of spiritual formation and growth.

3. An increasing number of Seventh-day Adventist writers are focusing on spiritual life. Their insights on spirituality, with their emphasis on the unique doctrines of Seventh-day Adventist Church, make their writings of great importance to Adventist
members. It is further recommended that study of the Seventh-day Adventist writers on the issue of spirituality be done, and church members be made aware of the discoveries and suggestions of these writers.

4. While both classical and contemporary writers have enriched the understanding of spirituality immensely there is still more to be explored. A reading of those great spiritual formation biographies and a careful study of today’s literature on spirituality is recommended as a tool for a better understanding of spiritual life and how to pursue it.

To North Miami Beach SDA Church

1. Though the quality and quantity of the material presented and distributed to the participants was considerably rich, it should be taken into consideration however, that this was the participant’s first experience in spiritual formation. Given this fact, it is believed that there must be a continuation of the program to help participants keep focused on what they have learned. It is, therefore, recommended that a specific follow-up program be designed and implemented very soon so that participants will continue to grow in their spiritual journey. It is also recommended that the participants be involved and enrolled as pastoral assistants in future spiritual programs in the church.

2. Despite all obstacles and inadequate conditions, it is obvious that the Spirit of God blessed the program that brought spiritual benefits to the lives of the participants. The results of the program and the testimonies of participants give evidence that the program is necessary for the entire congregation. A transitional series entitled, “One Hour with Christ,” was promoted to all church members. It is recommended that the spiritual formation program be adjusted to the size and needs of the entire church and built upon the “One Hour with Christ” series, and applied for all church members.
3. It is strongly recommended that the church board work diligently to provide adequate conditions for participants in the program, even if it will cost the church money to rent a special place for the meetings. Special care must be taken to avoid interruptions of any kind and to prevent unscheduled events.

4. One of the most important elements in a spiritual formation program is the interaction between participants and their leader and among the participants themselves. Even if the participants have adequate conditions for meetings, the need for interaction and fellowship is difficult to fully meet in one hour-and-a-half weekly meetings. Therefore it is highly recommended that one weekend retreat at the beginning of the program and one retreat at the end of the program be included in the general schedule. It is further recommended that the church provide the necessary funds for such retreats to take place.

5. It is recommended that worship services and prayer meetings make room for genuine and personal testimonies that illustrate the new meaning of spiritual expressions. People need to hear and see what practicing the presence of God really means.

To Denominational/Conference Administration

1. It is strongly recommended that conference, union, and division administration take a proactive approach as to what secularism and postmodern cultural shifts have upon the spirituality of the local church. It is also recommended that training for spiritual formation be provided and promoted for a deeper spiritual life in the things of God. It is recommended that this initiative target first the pastors, then the leaders of higher levels of church organization.

2. It is recommended that local conference administration assist leaders of the
local church in becoming aware of the necessity of spiritual formation in the life of
curch and provide opportunities for training and spiritual emphasis.

3. It is recommended that the conference give pastors who will plan and
coordinate a spiritual formation program one month in addition to his or her vacation
time, to better prepare for the seminars that will be presented. It is also recommended that
whenever a pastor has more than one church in his or her pastoral care, the conference
will allow the pastor to adjust his or her agenda according to the needs of the spiritual
program.

For the Leadership Task

1. In light of the fact that spiritual formation participants need to be in touch with
the spiritual leader more than usual, it is recommended that the pastor cooperate with the
conference leaders in advance and obtain conference approval in order to focus more on
the program for a specific period of time.

2. It is recommended that spiritual formation presenters be exposed to and
participate in other appropriate and relevant spiritual formation programs as part of an
on-going process of training and continuing spiritual education. It also is recommended
that teams of spiritual leaders whose focus will be to lead others in the process of
formation, be formed and thus learn from each other how to grow spiritually, improving
their skills and methods.

3. It is strongly recommended that local church leadership be exposed to an
intentionally structured process for spiritual formation. A plan is recommended that will
expose all church officers at the beginning of each new officer term to a process of
spiritual emphasis, training and equipping them to lead the members of their departments on the same spiritual road they learned to walk.
APPENDIX A

LETTERS TO PARTICIPANTS
Spiritual Formation Program

The purpose of this project is to implement a Spiritual Formation Program in the North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church in order to meet your spiritual needs, and to measure the effects of the program upon your spiritual life.

A number of four spiritual seminars will be presented to participants over a period of at least four months. Weekly meetings and personal discussion will take place with the participants during the same period of time. Together we will learn from God how to fulfill His plan for our life and how to be with our Savior all the time, even when we are occupied with our daily duties.

It is the faith of your pastor that by attending this program and by following the Biblical principles of spiritual growth you will experience a huge progress in your spiritual life and in all your relationships. Yes, it is your pastor’s hope and prayer that by seriously attending this Spiritual Formation Program in following Jesus example, in surrendering to the leading of the Holy Spirit, in practicing His Spiritual disciplines and by feeding daily on the Word of God your relationship with the Lord, with yourself, and with others will be wonderfully restored and mad whole. All of you are invited and more than welcomed to attend. Either you have been living an abundant spiritual life so far or you want to learn how to experience God’s presence in your life on a daily basis, this program is for you. Either you long for a deeper communion with God or your soul—for the first time—is looking for a real and meaningful connection with your Savior Jesus Christ, this program is for you. In fact, this Spiritual Formation Program is meant to guide you to experience God and Salvation in a personal and authentic way, and to prepare you to live by Jesus, through Jesus and for Jesus...for ever.

While you decide prayerfully whether to participate or not please answer the following questions:
- Have you attended a Spiritual Formation Program so far? Yes___ No___
- Do you remember a Spiritual Formation Program presented in N.M. Beach Church since you are a member of this Church? Yes___ No___
  If the answer is “yes”, please mention the time and the content of the program.
- Do you realize how important is for you to be an active participant in a Spiritual Formation Program and to learn how to be with Jesus all the time? Yes___ No___
- Would you like to attend the sessions of the Spiritual Program that will take place in our Church? Yes___ No___
- Are you making the decision right now to enroll in this Spiritual Formation Program? Yes___ No___

My Name:____________________ Phone:____________________

Suggestions:__________________________________________

_________________________________________________

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II. Live daily for the Salvation of others – Make sure that your life (with your thoughts, words, and deeds) is a living testimony for Christ, and your character and behavior bring others to Jesus.

III. Live daily for the glory of God - Make sure that your entire life, not only your words, but also your thoughts, motives, intentions, attitude and actions exalt and glorify God.

During our daily meetings we’ll explore this plan and will further learn:
1. How to live in God’s Presence
2. How to restore our relationships
3. How to fulfill the mission we have in this life
4. How to prepare for eternity

This coming Sunday at 6:00 p.m. and Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. you are invited to come to church in order to make a special preparation for this spiritual event of the Week of Prayer. For those of you who are thirsting after God and are longing for a real and lasting change and for a constant and deeper relationship with the Lord, the program will continue for another 40 days with weekly meetings.

You receive now a “Christian Spiritual Participation Profile” to be filled out (if you wish) in order to measure your progress in your walk with God. Please use a pencil, and if assistance is needed, you may ask Sister Jessie, Polly Anna and Nathalie for help. Please bring the test back this coming Sunday evening.

Keep in mind: I’ll make myself available every single evening from 6:30 to 7:30 for personal discussions and for spiritual assistance. I would be glad to see that you too are interested and come earlier to meet with your pastor. Sister Elsie and Elder Simon can help you to schedule your special appointment with your Pastor.

Do not forget: This is a very important time in the history of humankind and in the history of our church. Thinking to the time of the end, the prophet of God is conveying us the message that “A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work” (Selected Messages, vol. 1, p. 121).

Come and learn how to reconcile with God, and with those in your home, in your church, and with those who are in the world. Come and taste the sweet experience of forgiveness and restoration. Come and center your life on the “Eternal Rock of Ages”. Come and experience a new revival!

With love and care,

Your pastor and friend,

Greg Leordean
3.50 in the Service category; and
4.25 in the Stewardship category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
4.67 in the Prayer category;
4.75 in the Repentance category;
4.25 in the Worship category;
4.57 in the Bible Reading category;
3.50 in the Meditation category;
5.00 in the Examen of Conscience category;
3.50 in the Evangelism category;
3.20 in the Fellowship category;
4.00 in the Service category; and
4.50 in the Stewardship category.

The differences are:
-0.16 in the Prayer category;
+0.25 in the Repentance category;
-0.25 in the Worship category;
+0.43 in the Bible Reading category;
-0.50 in the Meditation category;
+0.37 in the Examen of Conscience category;
+0.50 in the Evangelism category;
-0.40 in the Fellowship category;
+0.50 in the Service category; and
+0.25 in the Stewardship category.

This person increased in the Repentance, Bible Reading, Examen of Conscience, Evangelism, Service and Stewardship categories and decreased in the Prayer, Worship, Meditation and Fellowship categories.

Case 0005, Male, Age Group 25-39

This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
4.67 in the Prayer category;
4.50 in the Repentance category;
4.50 in the Worship category;
3.86 in the Bible Reading category;
2.50 in the Meditation category;
4.50 in the Examen of Conscience category;
1.75 in the Evangelism category;
3.00 in the Fellowship category;
4.00 in the Service category; and
4.50 in the Stewardship category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
5.00 in the Prayer category;
4.25 in the Repentance category;
4.25 in the Worship category;
3.29 in the Bible Reading category;
2.50 in the Meditation category;
4.25 in the Examen of Conscience category;
3.25 in the Evangelism category;
2.80 in the Fellowship category;
3.00 in the Service category; and
4.00 in the Stewardship category.

The differences are:
+0.33 in the Prayer category;
-0.25 in the Repentance category;
-0.25 in the Worship category;
-0.57 in the Bible Reading category;
0.00 in the Meditation category;
-0.25 in the Examen of Conscience category;
+1.50 in the Evangelism category;
-0.20 in the Fellowship category;
-1.00 in the Service category; and
-0.50 in the Stewardship category.

This person increased in the Prayer and Evangelism categories, remained the same in the Meditation category and decreased in the rest of the categories.

Case 0006, Female, Age Group 40-65
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
4.00 in the Prayer category;
3.50 in the Repentance category;
3.75 in the Worship category;
4.29 in the Bible Reading category;
2.25 in the Meditation category;
4.38 in the Examen of Conscience category;
2.75 in the Evangelism category;
2.60 in the Fellowship category;
3.25 in the Service category; and
3.00 in the Stewardship category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
5.00 in the Prayer category;
5.00 in the Repentance category;
5.00 in the Worship category;
4.86 in the Bible Reading category;
4.25 in the Meditation category;
5.00 in the Examen of Conscience category;
4.50 in the Evangelism category;
3.40 in the Fellowship category;
4.25 in the Service category; and
4.50 in the Stewardship category.

The differences are:
+1.00 in the Prayer category;
+1.50 in the Repentance category;
+1.25 in the Worship category;
+0.57 in the Bible Reading category;
+2.00 in the Meditation category;
+0.62 in the Examen of Conscience category;
+1.75 in the Evangelism category;
+0.80 in the Fellowship category;
+1.00 in the Service category; and
+1.50 in the Stewardship category.

This person increased in all categories listed above.

Case 0007, Female, Age Group 60+

This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:

4.67 in the Prayer category;
4.50 in the Repentance category;
5.00 in the Worship category;
4.29 in the Bible Reading category;
4.25 in the Meditation category;
4.75 in the Examen of Conscience category;
3.50 in the Evangelism category;
3.80 in the Fellowship category;
4.50 in the Service category; and
4.50 in the Stewardship category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:

5.00 in the Prayer category;
5.00 in the Repentance category;
5.00 in the Worship category;
4.86 in the Bible Reading category;
4.25 in the Meditation category;
5.00 in the Examen of Conscience category;
4.00 in the Evangelism category;
4.60 in the Fellowship category;
5.00 in the Service category; and
5.00 in the Stewardship category.

The differences are:

+0.33 in the Prayer category;
+0.50 in the Repentance category;
0.00 in the Worship category;
+0.57 in the Bible Reading category;
0.00 in the Meditation category;
+0.25 in the Examen of Conscience category;
+0.50 in the Evangelism category;
+0.80 in the Fellowship category;
+0.50 in the Service category; and
+0.50 in the Stewardship category.
This person remained the same in the *Worship* and *Meditation* categories and increased in all the other categories.

**Case 0008, Male, Age Group 40-65**

This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:

- 4.33 in the *Prayer* category;
- 4.50 in the *Repentance* category;
- 5.00 in the *Worship* category;
- 4.14 in the *Bible Reading* category;
- 3.75 in the *Meditation* category;
- 4.88 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
- 4.50 in the *Evangelism* category;
- 4.20 in the *Fellowship* category;
- 4.67 in the *Service* category; and
- 4.33 in the *Stewardship* category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:

- 4.83 in the *Prayer* category;
- 4.00 in the *Repentance* category;
- 5.00 in the *Worship* category;
- 3.86 in the *Bible Reading* category;
- 3.75 in the *Meditation* category;
- 4.63 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
- 3.50 in the *Evangelism* category;
- 4.40 in the *Fellowship* category;
- 3.25 in the *Service* category; and
- 4.00 in the *Stewardship* category.

The differences are:

- +0.50 in the *Prayer* category;
- -0.50 in the *Repentance* category;
- 0.00 in the *Worship* category;
- -0.28 in the *Bible Reading* category;
- 0.00 in the *Meditation* category;
- -0.25 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
- -1.50 in the *Evangelism* category;
- +0.20 in the *Fellowship* category;
- -1.42 in the *Service* category; and
- -0.33 in the *Stewardship* category.

This person increased in the *Prayer* and *Fellowship* categories, remained the same in the *Worship* and *Meditation* categories and decreased in the rest of the categories.

**Case 0009, Female, Age Group 40-65**

This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:

- 5.00 in the *Prayer* category;
- 5.00 in the *Repentance* category;
5.00 in the *Worship* category;
4.43 in the *Bible Reading* category;
4.50 in the *Meditation* category;
4.75 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
3.75 in the *Evangelism* category;
3.20 in the *Fellowship* category;
3.75 in the *Service* category; and
3.50 in the *Stewardship* category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
5.00 in the *Prayer* category;
5.00 in the *Repentance* category;
5.00 in the *Worship* category;
4.71 in the *Bible Reading* category;
4.50 in the *Meditation* category;
4.75 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
4.00 in the *Evangelism* category;
3.40 in the *Fellowship* category;
4.50 in the *Service* category; and
4.25 in the *Stewardship* category.

The differences are:
0.00 in the *Prayer* category;
0.00 in the *Repentance* category;
0.00 in the *Worship* category;
+0.28 in the *Bible Reading* category;
0.00 in the *Meditation* category;
-0.25 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
+0.25 in the *Evangelism* category;
+0.20 in the *Fellowship* category;
+0.75 in the *Service* category; and
+1.25 in the *Stewardship* category.

This person decreased in the *Examen of Conscience* category, remained the same in the *Prayer, Repentance, Worship* and *Meditation* categories and increased in the rest of the categories.

Case 0010, Female, Age Group 40-65
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
3.83 in the *Prayer* category;
4.00 in the *Repentance* category;
4.25 in the *Worship* category;
4.14 in the *Bible Reading* category;
4.00 in the *Meditation* category;
3.75 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
4.00 in the *Evangelism* category;
4.20 in the *Fellowship* category;
3.75 in the *Service* category; and

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3.75 in the *Stewardship* category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
4.83 in the *Prayer* category;
5.00 in the *Repentance* category;
5.00 in the *Worship* category;
4.86 in the *Bible Reading* category;
5.00 in the *Meditation* category;
3.13 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
4.00 in the *Evangelism* category;
4.40 in the *Fellowship* category;
4.25 in the *Service* category; and
4.00 in the *Stewardship* category.

The differences are:
+1.00 in the *Prayer* category;
+1.00 in the *Repentance* category;
+0.75 in the *Worship* category;
+0.72 in the *Bible Reading* category;
+1.00 in the *Meditation* category;
-0.62 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
0.00 in the *Evangelism* category;
+0.20 in the *Fellowship* category;
+0.50 in the *Service* category; and
+0.25 in the *Stewardship* category.

This person decreased in the *Examen of Conscience* category, remained the same in the *Evangelism* category and increased in the rest of the categories.

Case 0011, Female, Age Group 40-65

This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
5.00 in the *Prayer* category;
0.00 in the *Repentance* category;
4.67 in the *Worship* category;
4.00 in the *Bible Reading* category;
3.75 in the *Meditation* category;
3.50 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
0.00 in the *Evangelism* category;
4.50 in the *Fellowship* category;
4.75 in the *Service* category; and
0.00 in the *Stewardship* category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
5.00 in the *Prayer* category;
4.50 in the *Repentance* category;
5.00 in the *Worship* category;
4.67 in the *Bible Reading* category;
3.75 in the *Meditation* category;
5.00 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
1.75 in the Evangelism category;
4.60 in the Fellowship category;
3.00 in the Service category; and
3.75 in the Stewardship category.

The differences are:
0.00 in the Prayer category;
+4.50 in the Repentance category;
+0.33 in the Worship category;
+0.67 in the Bible Reading category;
0.00 in the Meditation category;
+1.50 in the Examen of Conscience category;
+1.75 in the Evangelism category;
+0.10 in the Fellowship category;
-1.75 in the Service category; and
+3.75 in the Stewardship category.

This person decreased in the Service category, remained the same in the Prayer and Meditation category and increased in the rest of the categories.

Case 0012, Male, Age Group 40-65
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
4.83 in the Prayer category;
5.00 in the Repentance category;
5.00 in the Worship category;
4.29 in the Bible Reading category;
3.75 in the Meditation category;
5.00 in the Examen of Conscience category;
4.50 in the Evangelism category;
4.00 in the Fellowship category;
4.50 in the Service category; and
4.75 in the Stewardship category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
5.00 in the Prayer category;
5.00 in the Repentance category;
5.00 in the Worship category;
4.86 in the Bible Reading category;
4.00 in the Meditation category;
5.00 in the Examen of Conscience category;
4.00 in the Evangelism category;
5.00 in the Fellowship category;
4.25 in the Service category; and
5.00 in the Stewardship category.

The differences are:
+0.17 in the Prayer category;
0.00 in the Repentance category;
0.00 in the Worship category;
+0.57 in the Bible Reading category;
+0.25 in the Meditation category;
0.00 in the Examen of Conscience category;
-0.50 in the Evangelism category;
+1.00 in the Fellowship category;
-0.25 in the Service category; and
+0.25 in the Stewardship category.

This person decreased in the Evangelism and Service categories, remained the same in the Repentance, Worship, and Examen of Conscience categories and increased in the rest of the categories.

Case 0077, Female, Age Group 25-39

This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:

4.33 in the Prayer category;
4.50 in the Repentance category;
4.00 in the Worship category;
3.43 in the Bible Reading category;
3.00 in the Meditation category;
4.00 in the Examen of Conscience category;
2.75 in the Evangelism category;
3.00 in the Fellowship category;
2.25 in the Service category; and
3.50 in the Stewardship category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:

4.00 in the Prayer category;
5.00 in the Repentance category;
4.25 in the Worship category;
2.86 in the Bible Reading category;
3.25 in the Meditation category;
4.25 in the Examen of Conscience category;
3.00 in the Evangelism category;
2.80 in the Fellowship category;
3.00 in the Service category; and
3.50 in the Stewardship category.

The differences are:

-0.33 in the Prayer category;
+0.50 in the Repentance category;
+0.25 in the Worship category;
-0.57 in the Bible Reading category;
+0.25 in the Meditation category;
+0.25 in the Examen of Conscience category;
+0.25 in the Evangelism category;
-0.20 in the Fellowship category;
+0.75 in the Service category; and
0.0 in the Stewardship category.

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This person decreased in the Prayer, Bible Reading and Fellowship categories, remained the same in the Stewardship category and increased in the rest of the categories.

Case 0017, Female, Age Group 40-65
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
- 4.80 in the Prayer category;
- 4.75 in the Repentance category;
- 5.00 in the Worship category;
- 4.29 in the Bible Reading category;
- 3.50 in the Meditation category;
- 4.88 in the Examen of Conscience category;
- 4.25 in the Evangelism category;
- 3.60 in the Fellowship category;
- 3.75 in the Service category; and
- 4.00 in the Stewardship category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
- 5.00 in the Prayer category;
- 5.00 in the Repentance category;
- 5.00 in the Worship category;
- 4.71 in the Bible Reading category;
- 4.25 in the Meditation category;
- 5.00 in the Examen of Conscience category;
- 4.50 in the Evangelism category;
- 4.00 in the Fellowship category;
- 4.50 in the Service category; and
- 4.00 in the Stewardship category.

The differences are:
- +0.20 in the Prayer category;
- +0.25 in the Repentance category;
- 0.00 in the Worship category;
- +0.42 in the Bible Reading category;
- +0.75 in the Meditation category;
- +0.12 in the Examen of Conscience category;
- +0.25 in the Evangelism category;
- +0.40 in the Fellowship category;
- +0.75 in the Service category; and
- 0.0 in the Stewardship category.

This person remained the same in the Worship and Stewardship categories and increased in all the other categories.

Case 0022, Male, Age Group 65+
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
- 4.33 in the Prayer category;
- 3.50 in the Repentance category; and

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4.00 in the Worship category;
2.71 in the Bible Reading category;
2.25 in the Meditation category;
2.50 in the Examen of Conscience category;
1.33 in the Evangelism category;
1.00 in the Fellowship category;
1.50 in the Service category; and
3.50 in the Stewardship category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
5.00 in the Prayer category;
4.75 in the Repentance category;
4.75 in the Worship category;
4.00 in the Bible Reading category;
3.25 in the Meditation category;
4.13 in the Examen of Conscience category;
2.25 in the Evangelism category;
2.40 in the Fellowship category;
2.50 in the Service category; and
3.25 in the Stewardship category.

The differences are:
+0.67 in the Prayer category;
+1.25 in the Repentance category;
+0.75 in the Worship category;
+1.29 in the Bible Reading category;
+1.00 in the Meditation category;
+1.63 in the Examen of Conscience category;
+0.92 in the Evangelism category;
+1.40 in the Fellowship category;
+1.00 in the Service category; and
-0.25 in the Stewardship category.

This person decreased in the Stewardship category and increased in all the other categories.

Case 0025

This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
4.50 in the Prayer category;
3.75 in the Repentance category;
4.50 in the Worship category;
3.29 in the Bible Reading category;
2.75 in the Meditation category;
4.00 in the Examen of Conscience category;
2.25 in the Evangelism category;
3.20 in the Fellowship category;
2.25 in the Service category; and
3.50 in the Stewardship category.
At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
  4.83 in the *Prayer* category;
  4.75 in the *Repentance* category;
  4.75 in the *Worship* category;
  3.57 in the *Bible Reading* category;
  3.00 in the *Meditation* category;
  4.25 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
  3.25 in the *Evangelism* category;
  3.40 in the *Fellowship* category;
  3.25 in the *Service* category; and
  3.25 in the *Stewardship* category.

The differences are:
  +0.33 in the *Prayer* category;
  +1.00 in the *Repentance* category;
  +0.25 in the *Worship* category;
  +0.28 in the *Bible Reading* category;
  +0.25 in the *Meditation* category;
  +0.25 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
  +1.00 in the *Evangelism* category;
  +0.20 in the *Fellowship* category;
  +1.00 in the *Service* category; and
  -0.25 in the *Stewardship* category.

This person decreased in the *Stewardship* category and increased in all the other categories.

**Case 0028, Female, Age Group 25-39**

This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
  4.67 in the *Prayer* category;
  4.25 in the *Repentance* category;
  4.50 in the *Worship* category;
  4.00 in the *Bible Reading* category;
  3.50 in the *Meditation* category;
  4.63 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
  3.25 in the *Evangelism* category;
  4.40 in the *Fellowship* category;
  4.50 in the *Service* category; and
  2.75 in the *Stewardship* category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
  4.50 in the *Prayer* category;
  4.50 in the *Repentance* category;
  4.50 in the *Worship* category;
  4.86 in the *Bible Reading* category;
  4.00 in the *Meditation* category;
  4.63 in the *Examen of Conscience* category;
  4.25 in the *Evangelism* category;
4.40 in the Fellowship category; 
4.75 in the Service category; and 
4.00 in the Stewardship category.
The differences are: 
-0.17 in the Prayer category; 
+0.25 in the Repentance category; 
0.00 in the Worship category; 
+0.86 in the Bible Reading category; 
+0.50 in the Meditation category; 
0.00 in the Examen of Conscience category; 
+1.00 in the Evangelism category; 
0.00 in the Fellowship category; 
+0.25 in the Service category; and 
+1.25 in the Stewardship category.

This person decreased in the Prayer category, remained the same in the Worship, Examen of Conscience, and Fellowship categories, and increased in all the other categories.
Chapter 6 (#2)

CSPP-Fifty Questions Survey

1. When I pray, I am confident that God will answer my prayer.
2. When I pray, I sense that God is infinite and holy.
3. In my prayers, I reveal to God my innermost needs and thoughts.
4. In my prayers I actively seek to discover the will of God.
5. In my prayers, I thank God for the salvation he has provided for me in Jesus Christ.
6. When experiences in my life lead me to despair or depression, I turn to God in prayer for deliverance.
7. Repentance is a part of my private prayers to God.
8. When I confess and repent of my sins, I experience the assurance of being forgiven by God.
9. I experience genuine sorrow for my sins.
10. When I confess a sin, I express a desire to be delivered from its power.
11. My worship of God is a response to what God has done for me.
12. My worship is focused on the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
13. My participation in the Lord's Supper (Communion, Eucharist) draws me into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ.
15. I reflect thoughtfully on passages I read in the Bible.
16. I listen to music that praises God.
17. I record in a journal my thoughts on my spiritual journey.
18. I freely forgive those who sin against me even when the damage or hurt they have caused is very great.
19. When I examine my life, I recognize my great need for God's redemptive work for me.
20. I evaluate my culture by principles found in the Bible.
21. When I read or hear reports of terrible crimes that have been committed against people, I grieve over the evil in the world.
22. When I hear about famines, floods, earthquakes and other disasters, I want to help the victims in some way.
23. When I see or learn about the immoral ways so many people live, I long for God's will to be done.
24. Even though evil seems to be so powerful and so pervasive, I feel confident that God will ultimately provide justice.
25. Even when a situation seems unbearably difficult or painful, I have confidence that through his providence, God can bring something good out of it.
26. I use biblically based principles to govern ethical decisions.
27. I read or study the Bible to learn the will of God.
28. When I read or study the Bible, I attempt to learn the enduring principles being taught by the specific passage I am considering.
29. I study the Bible to understand the doctrines of my church.
30. As part of my study of the Bible, I consider how the church has dealt with issues throughout its history.
31. When I read or study the Bible, I change my beliefs and/or behavior to accommodate new information or understanding.
32. I read devotional articles and/or books.
33. I read or study the Bible: Never, Ten hours or less a year, About 1 to 2 hours a month, About 1 hour a week, About 15 to 30 minutes a day, and More than 30 minutes a day.
34. I work with other Christian believers for the purpose of introducing unchurched people to Jesus Christ.
35. Based on my abilities and spiritual gifts, I assist in some way in the teaching ministry of my Church.
36. I invite unchurched people to attend church or small-group meetings with me;
37. I pray for people and/or organizations that are working for the salvation of the unsaved.
38. When someone in my church is sick or experiencing some other problem and needs me, I help them.
39. I meet with a small group of Christian friends for prayer, Bible study, or ministry,
40. I serve as a peacemaker among my friends and/or among members in my church.
41. Within my local church, I associate personally even with those with whom I have no common social or intellectual interests.
42. I see evidence that my participation in my church helps to encourage or build up the whole congregation.
43. I serve in a church ministry or community agency to help people in need.
44. When a friend, believer, or neighbor suffers pain, hardship, or loss, I join them with my presence and suffer with them.
45. I depend on God to help me accomplish the work he calls me to do.
46. I use my home (apartment, dorm room) to provide hospitality to strangers or to those in need.
47. My actions in nature are guided by what is best for the environment.
48. I give financially to support the work of the church.
49. I do without things that I want in order to give sacrificially to the work of God,
50. I choose what to eat and drink and how to live my life based on the concept that caring for my health is being a good steward of God's blessing of life.
Chapter 6 (#3)
Evaluating the Effects of Spiritual Disciplines upon the Main Relationships

Case 0002, Female, Age Group 25-39
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
0.00 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
3.09 in the Growing through the Word category;
2.27 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
3.67 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
4.67 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
3.92 in the Growing through the Word category;
3.90 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
4.00 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

The differences are:
+ 4.67 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
+ 0.83 in the Growing through the Word category;
+ 1.63 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
+ 0.33 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

This person increased in all the four categories listed above.

Case 0003, Male, Age Group 25-39
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
3.69 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
3.50 in the Growing through the Word category;
1.58 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
4.00 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
4.07 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
3.25 in the Growing through the Word category;
2.50 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
3.60 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

The differences are:
+ 0.38 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
- 0.25 in the Growing through the Word category;
+ 0.92 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
- 0.40 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

This person increased in the Growing through my relationship with God and Growing through my relationship with others categories and decreased in the Growing through the Word and Growing through critical reflection categories.
Case 0004, Female, Age Group 25-39

This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
4.56 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
4.25 in the Growing through the Word category;
3.33 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
4.44 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
4.75 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
4.08 in the Growing through the Word category;
3.42 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
4.80 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

The differences are:
+ 0.19 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
- 0.17 in the Growing through the Word category;
+ 0.09 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
+ 0.36 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

This person increased in all categories except in the Growing through the Word category.

Case 0005, Male, Age Group 25-39

This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
4.63 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
3.58 in the Growing through the Word category;
2.75 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
4.30 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
4.75 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
3.08 in the Growing through the Word category;
2.92 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
3.80 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

The differences are:
+ 0.12 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
- 0.50 in the Growing through the Word category;
+ 0.17 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
- 0.50 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

This person increased in the Growing through my relationship with God and Growing through my relationship with others categories and decreased in the Growing through the Word and Growing through critical reflection categories.
Case 0006, Female, Age Group 40-65
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
3.75 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
3.27 in the Growing through the Word category;
3.00 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
4.10 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
4.94 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
4.25 in the Growing through the Word category;
4.25 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
5.00 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

The differences are:
+ 1.19 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
+ 0.98 in the Growing through the Word category;
+ 1.25 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
+ 0.90 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

This person increased in all the four categories listed above.

Case 0007, Female, Age Group 60+
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
4.75 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
4.42 in the Growing through the Word category;
3.83 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
4.50 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
5.00 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
4.67 in the Growing through the Word category;
4.50 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
5.00 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

The differences are:
+ 0.25 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
+ 0.25 in the Growing through the Word category;
+ 0.67 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
+ 0.50 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

This person increased in all the four categories listed above.

Case 0008, Male, Age Group 40-65
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
4.63 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
4.00 in the Growing through the Word category;
4.45 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
4.60 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
4.69 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
4.08 in the Growing through the Word category;
3.50 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
4.30 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

The differences are:
+ 0.06 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
+ 0.08 in the Growing through the Word category;
- 0.95 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
- 0.30 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

This person increased in the Growing through my relationship with God and
Growing through the Word categories and decreased in the Growing through my
relationship with others and Growing through critical reflection categories.

Case 0009, Female, Age Group 40-65
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
5.00 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
4.25 in the Growing through the Word category;
3.50 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
4.40 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
5.00 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
4.50 in the Growing through the Word category;
3.83 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
4.50 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

The differences are:
0.00 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
+ 0.25 in the Growing through the Word category;
+ 0.33 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
+ 0.10 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

This person remained at the top in the Growing through my relationship with God
category and increased in the other three categories.

Case 0010, Female, Age Group 40-65
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
3.88 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
4.17 in the Growing through the Word category;
4.00 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
3.80 in the Growing through critical reflection category.
At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
- 4.94 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
- 4.75 in the Growing through the Word category;
- 4.42 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
- 3.00 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

The differences are:
- + 1.06 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
- + 0.58 in the Growing through the Word category;
- + 0.42 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
- - 0.80 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

This person increased in the first three categories and decreased in the Growing through critical reflection category.

Case 0011, Female, Age Group 40-65

This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
- 0.00 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
- 4.30 in the Growing through the Word category;
- 0.00 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
- 3.20 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
- 4.69 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
- 4.36 in the Growing through the Word category;
- 3.17 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
- 4.70 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

The differences are:
- + 4.69 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
- + 0.06 in the Growing through the Word category;
- + 3.17 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
- + 1.50 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

This person increased in all four categories listed above.

Case 0012, Male, Age Group 40-65

This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
- 4.88 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
- 4.00 in the Growing through the Word category;
- 4.42 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
- 5.00 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
- 5.00 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
4.58 in the Growing through the Word category;  
4.42 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and  
5.00 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

The differences are:  
+ 0.12 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;  
+ 0.58 in the Growing through the Word category;  
0.00 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and  
0.00 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

This person increased in the Growing through my relationship with God and  
Growing through the Word categories and remained the same in the Growing through my  
relationship with others and Growing through critical reflection categories.

Case 0077, Female, Age Group 25-39  
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:  
4.06 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;  
3.50 in the Growing through the Word category;  
2.75 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and  
3.70 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:  
4.31 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;  
3.25 in the Growing through the Word category;  
2.75 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and  
3.90 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

The differences are:  
+ 0.25 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;  
- 0.25 in the Growing through the Word category;  
0.00 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and  
+ 0.20 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

This person increased in the Growing through my relationship with God and  
Growing through critical reflection categories, remained the same in the Growing through my  
relationship with others category, and decreased in the Growing through the  
Word category.

Case 0017, Female, Age Group 40-65  
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:  
4.80 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;  
4.08 in the Growing through the Word category;  
3.83 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and  
4.50 in the Growing through critical reflection category.
At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
4.94 in the *Growing through my relationship with God* category;
4.50 in the *Growing through the Word* category;
4.25 in the *Growing through my relationship with others* category; and
4.80 in the *Growing through critical reflection* category.

The differences are:
+ 0.14 in the *Growing through my relationship with God* category;
+ 0.42 in the *Growing through the Word* category;
+ 0.42 in the *Growing through my relationship with others* category; and
+ 0.30 in the *Growing through critical reflection* category.

This person increased in all four categories listed above.

Case 0022, Male, Age Group 65+
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
4.06 in the *Growing through my relationship with God* category;
2.92 in the *Growing through the Word* category;
1.18 in the *Growing through my relationship with others* category; and
2.00 in the *Growing through critical reflection* category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
4.81 in the *Growing through my relationship with God* category;
3.67 in the *Growing through the Word* category;
2.33 in the *Growing through my relationship with others* category; and
3.70 in the *Growing through critical reflection* category.

The differences are:
+ 0.75 in the *Growing through my relationship with God* category;
+ 0.75 in the *Growing through the Word* category;
+ 1.15 in the *Growing through my relationship with others* category; and
+ 1.70 in the *Growing through critical reflection* category.

This person increased in all four categories listed above.

Case 0025
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
4.25 in the *Growing through my relationship with God* category;
3.00 in the *Growing through the Word* category;
2.67 in the *Growing through my relationship with others* category; and
3.80 in the *Growing through critical reflection* category.

At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
4.69 in the *Growing through my relationship with God* category;
3.42 in the *Growing through the Word* category;
3.33 in the *Growing through my relationship with others* category; and
3.80 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

The differences are:
+ 0.44 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
+ 0.42 in the Growing through the Word category;
+ 0.66 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
0.0 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

1.0
This person increased in the first three categories and remained the same in the Growing through critical reflection category.

Case 0028, Female, Age Group 25-39
This case was characterized at the beginning of the program by:
4.44 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
4.08 in the Growing through the Word category;
3.83 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
4.00 in the Growing through critical reflection category.
At the end of the program this case was characterized as follows:
4.50 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
4.42 in the Growing through the Word category;
4.42 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
4.60 in the Growing through critical reflection category.

The differences are:
+ 0.06 in the Growing through my relationship with God category;
+ 0.34 in the Growing through the Word category;
+ 0.59 in the Growing through my relationship with others category; and
+ 0.60 in the Growing through critical reflection category.
Chapter 6 (#4)
Survey Results Charts for Questions 51-64

Responses to Questions 51-57 Before the Program

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Responses to Questions 51-57 After the Program

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Responses to Questions 58-64 Before the Program

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Responses to Questions 58-64 After the Program

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249
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Introduction

At its very core, sin is a problem of relationships—broken relationship between God and His people. But in only one way can Satan either cause or maintain a broken relationship between free thoughtful creatures and their Creator. And that is to deceive them about the character of their wonderful God. The fundamental activity of Satan is to lie, delude, and mislead minds. Jesus labeled him a liar by nature—indeed, the father of all lies. His power over the nations has been through deceit. Satan drew away...a third of the angels of heaven, misleading them into choosing his tyranny rather than God’s fairness. Using the very same method—implying untruths about God that he might tear down their faith in Him—Satan enticed our first parents into rebellion. Seven times in the book of Revelation, Satan’s last—day activity on this earth is identified as deception. To know God is to love Him and trust Him. Satan therefore fears nothing more than that people might come to a knowledge of the truth. Not truth in the abstract but truth in a Person.

Sin, therefore, has both its origins and its continued power in deception about God. When deception reaches its target—the minds of God’s free creatures, and they choose to believe it—the result is a shattered relationship. Trust in God gives way to skepticism, loyalty to rebellion, and intelligent submission to defiant independence... their self destructive behaviors are not the real sin problem. They are but the result. The real sin problem, the very heart of the matter, is a broken faith relationship.

Broken Faith Relationship

Satan’s deception about God leads to broken faith relationship

Broken Relationship produces three main results:

1. Guilt, deserving the second death.
2. Selfish character and values.
3. Sinful flesh—the sin damaged body.

God’s Remedies

1. The Truth about God in Jesus’ Life and Death.
   The Truth about God in Jesus’ Life and Death produces Faith.

2. Faith: Reconciled to God in Love Trust and Obedience.
   Faith produces three main results:
   a. Justification: Pardon: Viewed as Righteous, Accepted in Christ.
   b. A new Heart that loves Righteousness and hates sin.
   c. A new Spirit—Controlled by the new Spirit-led mind.
The Result of God’s Remedies: A Restored Relationship

By faith in Him as a personal Savior the union is formed
“The sinner unites his weakness to Christ's strength, his emptiness to Christ's fullness, his frailty to Christ's enduring might. Then he has the mind of Christ. The humanity of Christ has touched our humanity, and our humanity has touched divinity. Thus through the agency of the Holy Spirit man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. He is accepted in the Beloved.”

Remain in Me—How?
Jesus says, “Remain in me, and I will remain in you” (John 15:4). “Remaining in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. The channel of communication must be open continually between man and his God. As the vine branch constantly draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His own character.”

Christ in you—How?
“It is through the word that Christ abides in His followers. This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine.” You live “by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).

Seminar #2 Spiritual Formation
(The concept of spiritual formation was built upon the next four seminars developed by Ben Maxson in Principles of Stewardship, 1998, pp. 19-26.

Spiritual formation is the movement of the entire life towards God, opening every area of life to intimacy with God and allowing Him to do His will.

1. Four key ingredients to spiritual formation:
   a. Vision-Encountering God and seeing “Him who is invisible.” This includes understanding what He wants to do in and through us.
   b. Gospel-Knowing what Christ has done and is doing for us. This includes application of this knowledge in all our relationships.
   c. Lordship-Submitting, both personally and corporately, to God’s direction/control in all we are, have, and do.
   d. Presence-Integrating His presence into every area of our lives and everything we do.

2. Oneness with God occurs to the degree the four areas are integrated. This whole or oneness is always focused around the cross-God’s most complete revelation of Himself.
3. Most problems in our lives or in the church occur in the areas of either gospel or lordship, or both.
   e. Failure to integrate the gospel into our lives, or
   f. Failure to submit to Christ’s lordship.

4. The cause of our problems often lies in a loss of vision or presence.
   g. Loss of vision distorts the gospel.
   h. Loss of presence distorts lordship.

5. The best answer is a combination of vision and presence.
   i. A vision of God and a sense of His presence, transforms the way we live and function.
   j. Always begin with the vision, then move through gospel, lordship, and presence.

   **Practical Implications**

   **Ways to improve our vision**
   1. Study the lives of people in whom God has worked.
   3. Develop a prayer life-talk to God as a friend.
   4. Memorize Scripture.

   **Ways to understand the gospel better**
   1. Accept the reality that Jesus died for you.
   2. Accept that you are the object of God’s unconditional love.
   3. Study the truths of the gospel.
   4. Accept that salvation is entirely the work of God’s grace.

   **Ways to integrate Christ’s lordship**
   1. Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal what He wants you to do.
   2. Ask the questions:
      a. What difference does Jesus Christ make in my daily life?
      b. What difference does the gospel make in my daily life?
      c. What difference does the visible presence of Jesus make in my decisions today?
   3. Make Christ the priority in all decisions you make.

   **Ways to enhance our awareness of God’s presence**
   1. Accept the reality of Christ’s promise “Lo I am with you always”.
   2. Accept the reality of the Holy Spirit in your life—the presence of Jesus Christ (John 14:15-20).
   3. Make room for God in your daily life.
   4. Practice the presence of God.
Seminar #3 Lordship Model
See Ben Maxson

Seminar #4 Transforming the Mind

Why the mind is important
1. It is God’s ultimate gift in the creation of man.
2. It is what controls all of life.
3. It is where habits are formed.
4. It is where the relationship with God takes place.
5. It is where sin and the battle with sin take place (Rom 7:23; 8:6-7).

Biblical references about the mind
1. God asks us to love Him with our minds (Matt 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27).
2. God calls for a living sacrifice and a transformed mind (Rom 12:1-2).
3. We are transformed into His glory as we behold Him (2 Cor 3:18).
4. We can have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16).
5. “Let this mind [attitude] be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:5).
6. “Made new in the attitudes of our minds” (Eph 4:23).
7. God promises to put His law in our minds (Jer 31:33).
8. We should pray with our minds (1 Cor 14:15).
9. The peace of God will guard our minds (Phil 4:7).
10. We should focus our minds on true and heavenly things (Col 3:1-2; Phil 4:4-9).

Steps in transforming the mind
1. Prayerfully face your sinful reality.
2. Gratefully accept your reality in Christ.
3. Focus your mind on Christ and the things above (Col 3:2; Heb 12:1-3).
4. Be willing to live with the mystery of God.
5. Practice devotional skills.
6. Practice the presence of God.
7. Actively resist sin.

Seminar #5 Spiritual Growth and Development
See Ben Maxson

Seminar #6 Biblical Concepts about Spirituality
See also the outline in chapter 5

I. Spirituality

A. Defining Spirituality

“The quality of life generated and nourished by the Spirit of God, in which the believers experience the power and presence of God in their lives. True
spirituality comes from living under the control of the Holy Spirit and is evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit, spiritual maturity and growth in holiness” (The NIV Thematic Reference Bible 164-165).

**Spirituality is the realized Lordship of Jesus Christ.**

“It is that quality of life which responds to God's initiative and seeks to listen to the voice of God through a centering of oneself in Him, maintaining an openness to God and an absolute submission to His will” (Ben Maxson).

It's hard to perfectly define spirituality or to find a complete definition of it. But we can understand spirituality when we look to our Savior Jesus Christ and study His life. His spirituality was perfect and His entire life was an ongoing expression of His spirituality. We also can have a beautiful picture of the true Spirituality when we study in the Scriptures the lives of God’s holy men and women. But most importantly we can experience the true Spirituality by surrendering our lives to the Holy Spirit and by looking to Jesus and following His wonderful example of spiritual life.

II. Biblical Concepts
III. Nature of Spirituality
IV. Evidence of Spirituality
V. Aids to Spirituality
VI. Examples of Spirituality

**Seminar #7 In Search for the Spiritual**

**Truths to remember**

- God is real and He longs and pursues a continuing and authentic love relationship with you that is personal and real.
- God wants you to seek Him with your whole heart, to come to Him just as you are and let Him restore your entire life.
- God wants you to focus on the life and death of His Son, Jesus Christ and trust Him completely.
- God wants to fill you with His Spirit, to live with Him for ever.
- God wants to do in you, for you and through you what you cannot do by yourself.

**Prayerfully, study these Bible Passages**
Gen 3:15; Jer 29:11-14; Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:25-27; John 15:1-5; Heb 8:8-12

**Wonder over the following inspired promises**

“You, who in heart long for something better than this world can give, recognize this longing as the voice of God to your soul. Ask Him to give you repentance, to reveal Christ to you in His infinite love, in His perfect purity” (SC, p. 28).

“The Bible does not teach that the sinner must repent before he can heed the invitation of Christ, ‘Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest’ (Matt 11:28). It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ that leads to genuine repentance.

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Peter made the matter clear in his statement to the Israelites when he said, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ" (SC, p. 26).

"Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are, sinful, helpless, dependent. We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in the arms of His love and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity” (SC, p. 53-54).

**Spirituality—Myths**
1. The goodness myth-you are spiritual if you are good.
2. The knowledge myth-you are spiritual if you know your Bible.
3. The church attendance myth-you are spiritual if you go to church regularly.
4. The lifestyle myth-you are spiritual if you have a careful lifestyle.
5. The church leader myth-you are spiritual if you are a church leader.
6. The soul winner myth-you are spiritual if you are a soul winner.
7. The sin myth-you are not spiritual if you sin.
8. The poverty myth-you are spiritual if you are poor.
9. The giving myth-you are spiritual if you give a lot.
10. The prayer myth-you are spiritual if you pray well

(Adapted from Ben Maxson).

**Spirituality—Biblical Truths**
1. You are spiritual if you know God and Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.
2. You are spiritual if you love God with all your being and your neighbor as yourself.
3. You are spiritual if you no longer doubt God but trust Him completely and in everything.
4. You are spiritual if you are the light of the world and the salt of the earth.
5. You are spiritual if you have a new heart and a new mind and a new spirit.
6. You are spiritual if you constantly live in God's presence.
7. You are spiritual if you are holy-perfect in your character.
8. You are spiritual if out of love you obey God's Law and bare much fruit His glory.
9. You are spiritual if your self no longer lives but Christ lives in you and you in Christ.
10. You are spiritual if you are a Spirit-filled person.

**Seven Realities of God's Presence**

*God is always present around your life through the Holy Spirit.*

Jacob's Example: Read Gen 28:10-17.

"I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised
you.” When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it”. He was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven” (Gen. 28:15-17).

**God is always longing for you to come back to Him and He initiates a plan with His Son and the Holy Spirit to save your life and restore your broken relationship with Him.** “But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” (Gen 3:9); “I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you” (Isa 44:22).

**God is always inviting you through the Holy Spirit to come back to Him, to know the truth about Him through the life and death of His Son Jesus Christ so that your relationship with Him will be real, permanent and personal.** Read Gen 3:15. “I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you” (Isa 44:22).

**God is always waiting for you, moving upon your heart through the Holy Spirit to convince you to return home, helping you on the way; He is also running ahead of you to meet you while still far off, and finally He puts His arms of love around you in tears of joy.** Read Luke 15:11-24. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him” (v. 17-20).

**God always accepts you just as you are and work on your conciseness through His Spirit to give you repentance; He forgives your sins, washes away your sins, changes your clothes (heart mind and character), gives you His perfect white robe of righteousness (Jesus perfect character)—makes you His righteous son (daughter) just as you had never sinned.** “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son’. ‘But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found’. So they began to celebrate” (Luke 15:21-24; see also Isa 6:1-8).

**God is always longing and willing to keep you in His presence for a wonderful and ongoing relationship with you, to empower you through His Spirit to always keep your eyes upon Christ in order to live a godly life, He wants to make you victorious in your continuing battle over sin, over the evil one, over your self, over the world, and over your enemies.** When you fail and make mistake, He is always there for you to help you again, to lift you up and to resume the race. See also (Micah 7:8-9 and DA, 670-671).

**God always has a purpose, a plan and a mission for your life and through the Holy Spirit, He lives with you and in you.** After He redeems you, He sends you to
represent Him in the world and proclaim His love and Plan of Salvation to the lost (Isa 6:5-8; Matt 28:19-20).

“Those whose course has been most offensive to Him He freely accepts; when they repent, He imparts to them His divine Spirit, places them in the highest positions of trust, and sends them forth into the camp of the disloyal to proclaim His boundless mercy” (DA, 826).

**Conclusion:** God is always at work around you, through the Holy Spirit, longing to restore your broken relationship with Him, with yourself, and with others. He is always at work seeking you, calling upon you, finding you; He is working to resurrect you from your spiritual death, accepts you just as you are, forgive your sins, give you repentance, wash away your sins, change your character, appropriate to you the merits of the blood of His Son, bestow upon you His Spirits and empower you to live a victorious life for His glory and for the salvation of the lost.

Seminar #8 Holy Spirit

1. Holy Spirit assists believers in worship (Phil 3:30).
3. Holy Spirit baptizes believers (John 1:33; 1 Cor 12:13).
5. Holy Spirit dwells in believers (John 14:16; Rom 8:9).
6. Holy Spirit controls believer's minds (Rom 8:5, 6).
9. Holy Spirit equips believers for service (1 Cor 12:7; Eph 6:16).
11. Holy Spirit fights believers' sinful nature (Rom 8:13; Gal 5:17).
12. Holy Spirit gives believers access to the Father (Eph 2:18).
13. Holy Spirit glorifies Christ in believers (John 16:13-14; 1 Cor 12:3).
14. Holy Spirit guarantees future blessing to believers (1 Cor 1:22).
15. Holy Spirit frees believers (Rom 8:2).
17. Holy Spirit has fellowship with believers (2 Cor 13:14).
18. Holy Spirit helps believers (Phil 1:19).
19. Holy Spirit is a gift to believers (1 Thess 4:8; Titus 3:5-6).
20. Holy Spirit prays for and with believers (Rom 8:26; Eph 6:18).
22. Holy Spirit seals believers (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 4:30).

**Conclusion:** The Holy Spirit is involved in every aspect of Christian life recreating the believer into the image of God. Nothing good, holy or godly takes place in Christian life without the Holy Spirit presence and help!!!
Hindrances to the Holy Spirit

1. Resisting the Holy Spirit (Gen 6:3). "Then the LORD said, ‘My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.’"

2. Quenching the Holy Spirit. "Do not put out the Spirit fire" (1 Thess 5:19).

3. Lying to the Holy Spirit. "Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?’" (Acts 5:3).

4. Humiliating the Holy Spirit. "How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?" (Heb 10:29).

5. Grieving the Holy Spirit. "Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them" (Isa 63:3). “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph 4:30).

6. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit. "I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin" (Mark 3:29).

Seminar #9 You Must Be Born Again!

Spirituality and the Experience of a New Birth
You are not spiritual if you are not born again.
You are spiritual only if you are born again.
To be born again, you are to be born of water and of the Spirit of God.
God is longing to make you a new creation.

The New Birth Experience and the Kingdom of God
I. No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.
II. No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born again.
III. No one can believe in the Kingdom of God unless he is born again.
IV. No one can have the kingdom of God unless he is born again.
V. No one can remain in the kingdom of God unless he remains born again.

Thoughts from The Desire of Ages

There are thousands today who need to learn the same truth that was taught to Nicodemus by the uplifted serpent. They depend on their obedience to the law of God to commend them to His favor. When they are bidden to look to Jesus, and believe that He saves them solely through His grace, they exclaim, "How can these things be?" Like Nicodemus, we must be willing to enter into life in the same way as the chief of sinners. Than Christ, "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).
“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, ‘so the Son of man has been lifted up, and everyone who has been deceived and bitten by the serpent may look and live’. Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

“The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart, and we can say with Christ, “I delight to do Thy will, O my God” (Ps 40:8). (p. 171-176).

Seminar #10-11 The Promise of Jesus

“I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Fulfillment of the Promise
“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:1-4).

The Effects of the Promise Fulfillment
“When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call. Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day” (Acts 2:37-41).

Lessons from the Apostles
(This section is based on The Acts of the Apostles, chapters 4-5, p. 35-56).

How did the apostles prepare for the Holy Spirit?
1. “In obedience to Christ's command, they waited in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father—the outpouring of the Spirit.”
2. “They did not wait in idleness. The record says that they were “continually in the temple, praising and blessing God” (Luke 24:53).
3. “They also met together to present their requests to the Father in the name of Jesus. They knew that they had a Representative in heaven, an Advocate at the
thron of God. In solemn awe they bowed in prayer, repeating the assurance, “Whatsoever ye shall ask ...”

4. “Putting away all the differences, all desires for supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship” (AA, 37).

5. “They humbled their hearts in true repentance and confessed their unbelief” (AA, 35).

6. “They drew nearer and nearer to God” (AA, 37).

7. “The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily encounters to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ” (AA, 37).

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).

Results of the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost
What was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost?

1. “The glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the uttermost parts of the inhabited world.”

2. “As the disciples proclaimed the message of redeeming grace, hearts yielded to the power of this message.”

3. “The church beheld converts flocking to her from all directions”.

4. “Backsliders were reconverted. Sinners united with believers in seeking the pearl of great price”.

5. “Some who had been the bitterest opponents of the gospel became its champions”.

6. “The prophecy was fulfilled, ‘He that is feeble ... shall be as David; and the house of David ... as the angel of the Lord’” (Zech 12:8).

7. “Every Christian saw in his brother a revelation of divine love and benevolence.”

8. “One interest prevailed; one subject of emulation swallowed up all others. The ambition of the believers was to reveal the likeness of Christ's character and to labor for the enlargement of His kingdom.”

9. “Daily they prayed for fresh supplies of grace, that they might reach higher and still higher toward perfection.”

10. “Under the Holy Spirit's working even the weakest, by exercising faith in God, learned to improve their entrusted powers and to become sanctified, refined, and ennobled.”

What About Today?
“A work is to be accomplished in the earth, similar to that which took place at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the days of the disciples ... Many will be converted in a day, for the message will go with power” (RH, November 29, 1892).
“As Christ was glorified on the day of Pentecost, so will He again be glorified in the closing work of the Gospel when He shall prepare a people to stand the final test in the closing conflict of the great controversy” (RH, November 29, 1892).

“In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people.”

“For the daily baptism of the Spirit every worker should offer his petition to God. Companies of Christian workers should gather to ask for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to plan and execute wisely. . .” (AA, 50).

The Churches’ Greatest Need

“A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work... But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing . . . .” (1 SM, 120-128).

Seminar #12 Personal Inventory for Healing, Forgiveness, and Renewal
(This seminar is adapted from Jon Dybdahl’s seminar on Healing, Forgiveness, and Renewal, unpublished, March 19-30, 2001, Andrews University and completed with explanations from the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1)

Introduction
We are just a week before the Lord’s Supper and it would be appropriate to spend a quality time in searching our hearts before the Lord to see where we are in our walk with Him and what is the truth regarding our Spiritual life. In other words, How is our relationship with Him? What is the quality of our relationship with ourselves? And how is our relationship with one another (“with our neighbor”)?

Jon Dybdahl, one of our great teachers in Spiritual Formation affirms that “the path to spiritual renewal begins with a fearless, honest personal inventory.” What does that mean? Keep in mind the word “honest” and the word “renewal.” The purpose of the Plan of Salvation is “renewal”. Longing to restore our relationship with Him and with one another, God-the Father paid an immensurable price in sending His beloved Son to die for us. He also has sent His Spirit to work in us “to will and to do according to His good pleasure.” It’s about renewal! Our renewal! And it has to do with examining our hearts, confessing our sins, repenting and all these under the guidance of the Holy Spirit who can make us new. “Only as we look at what we have done and are doing and what others have done and are doing to us can we repent and forgive. That is the path to newness and healing.” Be prepared to spend a minimum of an hour every day during this week, doing this. Pray beforehand that God will guide your mind and renew you into His image.

In each area you must look at two things:
1. Your own personal actions and status. What are you responsible for?
2. The action of others and their relationship to you. What are others responsible for?
I. The Problem

A. Disruption - The Four Basic Relationships
Based on Genesis and the entrance of sin, a healthy, happy life is founded on three basic relationships: (1) the human - God relation; (2) the human - human relation - including relation with others and self; (3) the human - self relationship; (4) the human - nature relationship. The entrance of sin disrupted all four relationships.

1. The human - God/relationship
"I heard you -in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked and so I hid" (Gen 3:10).
How do you feel about God? Do you want to be with Him or do you feel naked and afraid? What is your relationship with Him? How much of your life is spent in hiding? In fear? What are your anxieties, phobias, and worries? (1 John 4: 18). Are you separated from God? Have your disobediences had a part in this separateness? How were you trained to relate to God? Did others teach you to fear and hide? What part have others played in separating you from God?

* The Bible version used in this document is the NIV.

2. The human - human relationship
"The woman you put here with me - she gave me some fruit and I ate it" (Gen 3:12).
"Your desire will be for your husband" (Gen 3:16).
What are your human relationships like? How is it between you and your parents, siblings, spouse, extended family, children, friends, and co-workers? Who do you blame? Who are you estranged from or uneasy around? What have you done to hamper relationships? How do you feel about yourself as a person? What people do you feel have wronged you? How have other people sinned against you?

3. The human - self relationship
"The eyes of both were opened and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves" (Gen 3:7).
"Who told you that you were naked?" (Gen 3:11).
How do you feel about yourself as a person? Does a sense of self-worthlessness and/or self-hatred often come to you? Do you wish you were someone else? Is it hard to be alone because you don't want to think about yourself or your life? What is your self-image? Has the way people have treated you in the past affected how well you like yourself? Have others influenced the way you see yourself?

4. The human - nature relationship
"I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing" (Gen 3:16).
"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it" (Gen 3:17).
"To dust will you return" (Gen 3:19).
Have you suffered from pain, overwork, and disease? Does death haunt you? Have you added to the deterioration of nature by your misuse and pollution? Do you find it hard to live by the physical rules of life that you know you should? Where have you gone wrong
in relation to nature and your obedience to the laws of nature? How have you suffered from nature's fall? How have others contributed to your broken relationship with nature? Has the sin of others against nature had a bad effect on you?

**B. Breaking the Ten Commandments**

"The Decalogue stands high above all other moral and spiritual laws. It is comprehensive of all human conduct. It is the only law that can effectively control the conscience. It is for all time a condensed manual of human conduct and covers the entire field of human duty. Our Lord referred to the commandments as the way whereby one might secure eternal life (Matt 19:16-19). They are suited to every kind of human society, applicable and in force so long as the world shall last (Matt 5:17, 18). They can never become obsolete, for they are the immutable expression of God’s will and character. It was with good reason that God delivered them to His people both orally and in writing (Exod 31:18; Deut 4:13).

The fact that the Ten Commandments were written on two tables of stone emphasizes their application to two classes of moral obligation: duty to God and duty to man (Matt 22:34-40). That which we owe to God is indispensable to that which we owe to man, for neglect of duties toward our neighbor will speedily follow the neglect of duty toward God."

For each commandment, ask yourself just what you have done to break it and then second, how others sinned against you by breaking it.

1. **"You shall have no other gods before me."**
   Do you have or have you ever had false gods?

2. **"You shall not make for yourself an idol... You shall not... worship them ..."**
   Anything that replaces God in our worship or lives is idolatry.
   Have you made anything or worshiped anything as an idol?

3. **"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord."**
   Have you said or done anything to bring disrepute to God's name?

4. **"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."**
   Have you been involved in Sabbath breaking?

5. **"Honor your father and mother."**
   Have you loved, honored and cared for our parents?

6. **"You shall not murder."**
   Have you murdered or desired to murder?

7. **"You shall not commit adultery."**
   Have you been involved in sexual sin?

8. **"You shall not steal."**
   Have you stolen property, knowledge, honor, or a good name from anyone?
9. **"You shall not give false testimony."**
Have you lied or prevaricated the truth by word, deed or even silence?

10. **"You shall not covet."**
Have you coveted or desired anything that belongs to another?

C. **Acts of the sinful nature**
   "In Gal 5:19-21 Paul gives us a list of specific deeds of the flesh that lead us to see in more detail our sin."

1. **Sexual Immorality (impurity and debauchery)**
Have you been involved in illicit or deviant sexual behavior including fornication, adultery, sexual molestation, abuse, use of pornography, habitual lust, etc? Are you a victim of abuse, incest, rape or sexual molestation?

2. **Idolatry**
Have you ever been involved in the worship of a non-Christian religion? What things in life have taken the place of supreme worship of God? Have you ever been hypnotized? Has a parent, relative, spouse or other person dedicated you or involved you in worship of a non-Christian religion?

3. **Witchcraft**
Have you ever involved yourself in any alliance with the devil, spirit powers, or the Occult? This includes pacts with the devil or spirit beings, visits to mediums, fortune tellers, astrologists or use of tarot cards, crystals, Ouija boards, ‘Dungeons and Dragons’ type games, lucky charms, fetish objects, demonic art and literature. Has anyone in your immediate family been involved with the above practices? Has someone cursed you or your family and/or dedicated you to any satanic or spirit power?

4. **Hatred**
Who or what do you hate that is good? Do certain people cause an almost automatic reaction of disgust in you? Are you a victim of hate? Who has shown hate towards you and how has it affected you?

5. **Discord (dissensions and factions)**
Have you done anything that has bought discord and disunity to your family, church, or occupation? What have you done to cause a “party spirit”? What have others done that has split apart a relationship in your life that was important?

6. **Jealousy and Envy**
Who are you jealous of? As you look at the people and property around you, who do you feel envious of? What role does jealousy play in your life? Have you been the victim of a jealous or envious person? What have they done to you?

7. **Fits of Rage**
Who are you angry at? Do you have at times an anger that disrupts your life? What is your temper like? What situations cause you anger? What past situations have left you bitter? Have you been the recipient of rage and anger that you did not deserve? What has
been done to you in anger?

8. Selfish Ambition
What drives your life? Is there a certain position of status you desire that you should not necessarily have? What do you do for the sake of your ambition? Has the selfish ambition of another injured you? Has your position been lost or your mental health destroyed by the selfish ambition of someone else?

9. Drunkenness (orgies)
Are you addicted to alcohol or any other drug? What do you chronically crave? What kind of behavior are you addicted to, or compulsively do? Are you in a relationship, family, or office where the substance abuse of another or other addictions like gambling or sex affect your life? Is anyone in your family tree an addict?

II. The Solution

A. Confession
Christian confession means that we admit to God where we have gone wrong. We need to be specific.

1. 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins.”
2. James 5: 16: “Therefore confess our sins to each other and pray for each other, so that you may be healed.”
3. Other confession to a mature fellow Christian is a benefit to helping us honestly face our sin and receive forgiveness. Some sins may need to be verbalized or written down.

To better understand Confession, please read this week the chapter “Confession,” from Steps to Christ.

B. Repentance
Repentance is a close partner to confession. The root word means to turn away from our sin and decide to renounce it and leave it. We are sorry for our wrong and ask God to deliver us from our sin.

1. “Repent . . . for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).
2. Sometimes confession and repentance mean that we make things right when we have sinned against another person. Counsel with another mature Christian can help us know when or how to do this.
3. Often performing some ritual act helps make our confession and repentance real. We can write out our sins on paper and then burn or destroy them. We can put a stake in the ground or erect a monument to commemorate our act.

To better understand Repentance, please read this week the chapter “Repentance,” from Steps to Christ.
C. Forgiveness

When we have confessed and repented we joyfully receive God's forgiveness of our sins. Forgiveness then means that once we are forgiven we offer that forgiveness to those who have sinner against us.

1. “Forgive us our sins for we also forgive everyone who sins against us” (Luke 11:4). “If you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your father in heaven may forgive you your sins” (Mark 11:25).

2. True forgiveness of another means we change our behavior toward them.

To better understand Forgiveness, please read this week the chapter, “Faith and Acceptance,” from Steps to Christ.

III. Conclusion

If you follow this procedure carefully, prayerfully, and reflectively you will be changed. Long-carried burdens will lift. Peace will come. A sense of God's presence will enfold you. The effects are often even very physical. You will in fact receive healing in the fullest sense.

Seminar #13 Twelve Dynamic Principles of Spiritual Life
(See principles in Chapter 5)

Seminar #14 Worship

Worship is our love response to God for who He is and what He has done for us. It is our response to His initiations and expressions of love to us. Worship as observed in Scripture, may be regarded as the direct acknowledgement to God of His nature, names, attributes and ways, whether by expressions of the heart in thanksgiving and praise, or by an action or attitude.

I. Worship God until you hear His voice (Matt 3:13-17):
- Through His Word
- Through His Spirit
- Through His angels
- Through His people
- Through your consciousness

II. Worship God until you obtain the victory (Gen 32:24-30):
- Over temptation
- Over sin
- Over the world
- Over self
- Over the evil one

III. Worship God until you have the assurance of salvation (Luke 18:9-14):
- You have accepted Jesus as your personal Savior
- Your sins are forgiven
- You are accepted in Jesus
- You have Christ's peace in your heart
- You have hope in His promises about your future

IV. Worship God until you are transformed (Matt 17:1-8; Exod 34:1-33-35; 1 Cor 3:18):
- A new mind
- A new heart
- A new spirit
- A new character
- A new behavior

V. Worship God until the Holy Spirit is poured out upon you (Acts 2:1-4):
- Born again by the Holy Spirit
- You are baptized with the Holy Spirit
- You are sealed with the Holy Spirit

VI. Worship God until you have a Revelation of His Glory (Exod 33:18):
- Until you are transfigured or glorified
- Like Moses-(Exod 33:18)
- Like Jesus-(Matt 17:1-5)

VII. Worship God until you are taken up to Heaven:
- Like Enoch
- Like Jesus

VIII. Worship God as long as you live – without ceasing:
- When things are going well
- When things are going bad
- When you have succeeded
- When you failed
- When you feel unworthy
- When you have hope
- When you are discouraged
- When you have the joy of salvation
- When you feel forsaken and alone
- When most of the world will worship the beast

IX. Worship God until Jesus comes
If you worship God this way you'll have the joy of worshiping Him throughout eternity.
Great Spiritual Men
Examples: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Daniel
Do you appreciate them? Do you love them? Do you want to become like them?

Q1. What do these great men and women have in common?
A: Faith (See Heb 11).
Remember the first principle: Whatever you do in life do it by faith!
Whatever they did they did by FAITH. They had a real faith in a REAL GOD
And that faith was developed and expressed by love, commitment and obedience.
Paul said, “The life I live now I live by faith in The Son of God who loved me and
gave Himself for me” (Gal 5:22).

Q2. What did this faith mean for them? What does it look like?
A: Living Relationship with God, fulfilling God’s plan, expressing love to God and to
men, obedience to God . . . obedience unto death, etc.

Summary: The main secrets of spiritual life are a living relationship with God by
faith that is nurtured by the practice of spiritual disciplines. The results of faith were
love and obedience. In many cases this obedience was to death, terrible death.
“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him
must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Heb
11:6).

Seminar #16 A Call to Holiness

The Call to be holy is from God
“But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do” (1 Pet 1:15).

Biblical Foundations—Old Testament
God intended Israel to be Holy: He says in Exodus: “You will be for me a kingdom of
priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites” (Exod
19:6). “You are to be my holy people” (Exod 22:31). ‘Be holy because I, the LORD your
God, am holy” (Lev 19:2). See also Lev 20:8; Lev 11:45; Lev 22:32; Deut 14:2-3.

New Testament—God’s Will and Purpose for the Christian Church is to be Holy
“This is the will of God, even your sanctification”. And he prays, “The very God of peace
sanctify you wholly” (1 Thess 4:3; 5:23). See also Eph 1:4; 1 Thess 3:13; 1 Thess 4:7.

The Cost of Holiness
The Bible also specifies clearly this is a very costly operation It cost God, the Father,
everything He had in order to perform holiness in the fallen human beings.
“And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own
blood” (Heb 13:12).
(Eph 5:25-27). "And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). "Because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (Heb 10:14).

**Eternal Life depends on Holiness**

"Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14).

**Appeal for Holiness**

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom 12:1-2). See also 2 Pet 3:11-14.

**God’s Ideal for us—From the Spirit of Prophecy, by Ellen G. White**

"God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach... What is the standard He has given for all who believe in Him? ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect’” (Matt 5:48). “As God is perfect in His high sphere of action, so man may be perfect in his human sphere” (CT 365). “The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness” (CT, 365).

**Conclusions: Seven Reasons for Becoming Holy**

*Because* you are God’s child . . . and He created you to be Holy.  
*Because* this is one of the main reasons of Jesus’ Sacrifice. Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered death on the cross to forgive you, to wash away your sins, to transform you and to make you Holy.  
*Because* if you do not become Holy through God’s grace, you make Jesus death of no value . . . He died in vain for you.  
*Because* if you are not Holy or do not become holy you justify Satan and his lies, you are or become a slave of Satan, a representative of his kingdom, and finally you become like the evil one and share his fate.  
*Because* there is no life apart from Holiness, and there is no beauty, no happiness, and no meaning in this temporary time of living if you lack Holiness.  
*Because* this is the only way you can represent the character of your Creator to this world, and attract sinners back to the saving love of God.  
*Because* this is the only passport to Heaven. There is no Eternal Life without Holiness.

**Seminar #17 Responding to Jesus**

**Introduction**

Jesus is the Source, the Center, the Goal the Example, the Essence and the Reward of Spiritual Life. Everything in the spiritual life is connected to Him. In fact Jesus is not only the source of life in general and of the spiritual life in special way, but also He is the
Spiritual Life. The secret of the temporary as well as the eternal life is to have Jesus in life. “He who has the Son has life.” There is no life apart from Jesus. “He who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:12).

**Jesus Christ and His Invitation**

Jesus came to this earth to reveal the true character of God, to redeem us from sin through His death on the cross, and to give us a perfect example of life. Throughout the Bible He expresses His divine desire for fellowship, and invites us to come to Him in order to know Him personally and have a real and continuing relationship with Him. We may read or hear His invitations made to us repeated over and over again in His loving and different ways:

1. Seek Me - Come to Me (Isa 55:6-7; Jer 29:13-14; Matt 11:28)
2. Look to Me (Heb 12:2; Isa 51:1)
3. Listen to Me (Isa 48:12; Isa 48:16-18; Matt 17:5)
4. Get to know Me (John 17:3)
5. Trust Me - Have faith in Me (John 14:1)
6. Accept Me - Receive Me in your life (Rev 3:20; John 1:11-13)
7. Follow Me - Obey Me (Matt 16:24; Mark 1:17-18; Luke 9:59)
8. Learn of Me (Matt 11:29)
9. Live with Me (John 14:23; John 14:15-18)
10. Live in Me - Remain in Me (John 15:5; John 6:57-58; Col 3:2-3)
11. Let Me live in you - Let Me be your life (John 15:5; John 17:23; Col 3:4)
12. Live for Me (2 Cor 5:15-16; Matt 25:45; Rom 14:7-8)

"'Learn of Me', says Jesus; Redemption is that process by which the soul is trained for heaven. This training means a knowledge of Christ. It means emancipation from ideas, habits, and practices that have been gained in the school of the prince of darkness. The soul must be delivered from all that is opposed to loyalty to God” (DA 330).

**Seminar #18 Introduction to Spiritual Disciplines**

**Definition**

According to Ben Maxson, “Spiritual disciplines are the tools of discipleship. They work to help us focus on Jesus Christ, explore principles, and integrate discipleship into every area of life. These are skills which help us integrate God into our lives and apply God to our lifestyles. They involve things such as prayer, fasting, relational Bible reading, meditation, tithing, etc. The integrating disciplines such as prayer, relational Bible reading, meditation, and Scripture memorization are the first ones with which to begin. The Christian’s journey toward wholeness in the image of Christ for the sake of others progresses by means of spiritual disciplines” (Maxson, 2002, p. 3-10).

“In his book Celebration of Disciplines, Richard Foster argues that ‘the purpose of disciplines is freedom’. Our aim is the freedom, not the discipline... The Disciplines are for the purpose of realizing a greater good. In and of themselves they are of no value whatever. They have value only as a means of setting us before God so that he can give
us the liberation we seek. The liberation is the end; the disciplines are merely the means” (p. 110).

The Purpose of Spiritual Disciplines
The Purpose of the Spiritual Disciplines is the total transformation of the person. They aim at replacing old destructive habits of thought with new life-giving habits. Willsey states that “the purpose of the disciplines is to place the individual in position where the central focus is on God enabling lives to be transformed” (1991). Talking about what Christ thought concerning our need to change, Ellen White writes, “He knew that unless there was a decided change in the principles and purposes of the human race, all would be lost” (DA 92).

Brief Review of Twenty-two Spiritual Disciplines

Prayer: Communication with God
“Prayer is opening the heart to God as to a friend” (SC, p. 93). Of all the Spiritual Disciplines prayer is the most central because it ushers us into the perpetual communion with the Father. The Discipline of prayer brings us into the deepest and highest work of human spirit. Real prayer is life creating and life changing. “To pray is to change. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us.”

Study: Learning about God
No Spiritual Discipline is more important than the intake of God’s Word. Nothing can substitute for it. There simply is no healthy Christian life apart from a diet of the milk and meat of Scripture.

Meditation: Contemplation: Thinking about God, His mighty acts, and His character. Christian meditation is the ability to hear God’s voice and obey his word. Meditation “calls us to enter into the living presence of God for ourselves” (Foster, 24).

Worship: Worship is the human response to the divine initiative.
It is adoring God. “The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him” (John 4:23).

Fasting: Fasting: Choosing to focus special attention on God, by intentionally relinquishing some activities, food belongings that could become a distraction or hindrance.
More than any other Discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us. “Fasting helps us keep our balance in life” (Foster, 56).

Guidance: Seeking God’s leadership and recognizing God’s lordship in all areas of our lives.

Journaling: Keeping a record of a journey with one’s best friend.
It becomes the “book of providence” for those who learn the discipline of keeping an account of God’s presence in life.
The journal can be a mirror in the hands of the Holy Spirit in which He reveals His perspective on our attitudes, thoughts, words, and actions.

Simplicity: Arranging life around a few consistent purposes, which would involve organizing one’s priorities with God.
The Christian Discipline of simplicity is an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle. Simplicity sets us free to receive the provision of God as a gift that is not ours to keep and can be freely shared with others.
**Chastity:** Turning away from dwelling upon or engaging in the sexual dimension of our relationships to others.

Sexuality is one of the most powerful and subtle forces in human nature. An essential part of discipline of chastity consists in the practice of abstaining from sex and from indulging in sexual feelings and thoughts, and thus learning how to not be governed by them.

**Secrecy:** Abstaining from causing our good deeds and qualities to be known.

As we practice this discipline we learn to love to be unknown and even to accept misunderstanding without the loss of our peace, joy or purpose. We express that love and humility that hope for others to be seen in a better light than us.

**Frugality:** Abstaining from using money or goods at our disposal in ways that merely gratify our hunger for status, glamour, or luxury.

Practicing frugality means we stay within the bounds of what general good judgment would designate as necessary for the kind of life to which God has led us.

**Solitude:** Delighting in the presence of God without any other human beings around.

The fruit of solitude is increased sensitivity and compassion for others. There comes a new freedom to be with people. There is a new attentiveness to their needs, new responsiveness to their hurts.

**Silence:** Sharing time with God without the intrusion of verbal conversation.

Without silence there is no solitude. Solitude and inner silence are inseparable. Though silence sometimes involves the absence of speech, it always involves the act of listening. Simply to refrain from talking without a heart listening to God is not silence.

**Submission:** “Honoring the other person with esteem” (Eph 5).

The Biblical teaching on submission focuses primarily on the spirit with which we view other people. Scripture does not attempt to set forth a series of hierarchical relationships but to communicate to us an inner attitude of mutual subordination. In submission we are at least free to value other people.

**Service:** Working for God; giving loving gifts of service.

Jesus was the perfect Servant. His greatness is seen in the lowliness. He was willing to experience in order to serve the most basic needs of His twelve friends. Service is not a list of things that we do, though in it we discover things to do. It is not a code of ethics, but a way of living.

**Stewardship:** “It is the lifestyle of one who accepts Christ’s lordship, walking in partnership with God and acting as God’s agent to manage His affairs on earth” (Maxson, 7). Stewardship is based on who God is.

**Evangelism-Witnessing:** Reaching out to the lost—Mediating God’s Presence to others.

It is to present Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit to sinful people, in order that they may come to put their trust in God through Him, to receive Him as their Savior, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church.

**Sacrifice:** Willing to give for the sake of others.

The discipline of sacrifice is one in which we forsake the security of meeting our needs with what is in our hands. It is total abandonment to God.

**Confession:** Being honest with God and maybe even letting trusted others know our deepest needs and weaknesses so that they can support us and hold us accountable.
Confession is both a grace and a discipline. It is grace because is given by God and it is a discipline because there are things we must do. It is a consciously course of action that brings us under the shadow of the Almighty.

**Fellowship:** Enjoying the company of others.

In fellowship we engage in common activities of worship, study, prayer, celebration, and service with other disciples.

**Celebration:** Rejoicing in the relationship; a response of gratitude to the goodness of God, life and others.

Celebration gives us the strengths to live in all other disciplines. When faithfully pursued, the other disciplines bring us deliverance from those things that have made our lives miserable for years which, in turn, evokes increased celebration.

**Watchfulness:** Keeping the attention on God so that nothing should separate from Him, and to be protected from the enemy.

“Nothing was every achieved without discipline; and many an athlete and many a man has been ruined because he abandoned discipline and let himself grow slack. Coleridge is the supreme tragedy of indiscipline. Never did so great a mind produce so little. He left Cambridge University to join the army; but he left the army because, in spite of all the erudition, he could not rub down a horse; he returned to oxford and left without a degree. He began a paper called *The Watchman* which lived for ten numbers and then died. It has been said of him; ‘He lost himself in vision of work to be done, that always remained to be done. Coleridge had every poetic gift but one—the gift of sustained and concentrated effort’. In his head and in his mind he had all kinds of books, as he said himself, ‘completed save for transcription’. ‘I am on the eve’, he says, ‘of sending to the press twp octavo volumes’. But the books were never composed outside Coleridge’s mind, because he would not face the discipline of sitting down to write them out. No one ever reached any eminence, and no one having reached it ever maintained it, without discipline” (William Barclay quoted by Whitney in *Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life*, p. 22).

**Seminar #19 The Quest for Spiritual**

**God’s Will Concerning Us**

*It is God’s will that you should be sanctified* (1 Thess 4:3).

“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 5:23).

“Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord” (Heb 12:14).

**God’s will and desire concerning our relationship with His Son:**
- To get eternal life through Him
- To love Him, trust Him, and obey Him
- To have Him as our perfect example; to learn from Him, and copy His ways in everything
- To worship Him, and proclaim Him to the world
- To be filled with His Spirit and become like Him

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“For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have **eternal life**, and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:40).

“**And this is the testimony:** **God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life;** he who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (John 5:11-12).

“And a voice from heaven said, **‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased’**” (Matt 3:17).

“While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, **‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!’**” (Matt 17:5).

“And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, **‘Let all God’s angels worship him’**” (Heb 1:6).

“While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven”.

**“Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy”** (Luke 24:51-52).

“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. . . . I will not leave you as orphans” (John 14:15-17-18).

**The Life of our Lord Jesus Christ**

Jesus came to this earth to reveal the true character of God, to redeem us from sin, through His death on the cross, and to give us a perfect example of life.

“**Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,** for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt 11:29).

**“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus,** the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:2).

“**These are those who did not defile themselves . . . , for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes.** They were purchased from among men and offered as first fruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless” (Rev 14:4-5).

**I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.** I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

**Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them”** (John 13:15-17).

**Jesus and the Spiritual Life**

“The concern over spirituality comes out of an understanding the life of Christ.”

As we look at Jesus life, we can understand that He had a full and complete life with God.

Reading the Gospels:

**Seven Distinct Areas Emerge from the Life of Jesus**

From Christ life we can identify seven areas of spirituality:

1. Personal devotion to God.
2. Love to God, Himself and to all people.
3. Compassion toward all people.
4. Proclamation of the good news of the gospel—Evangelism toward the lost.
5. Virtue in thought, word, and action.
6. Empowerment by the Spirit.
7. Harmony between faith and work—Uniting the physical and spiritual.
These seven areas in Jesus' life provide a basis for understanding our own walk with Him. And they give us a picture or outline for our entire spiritual life.

Seven Movements of Spirituality in the History of the Church

The history of the church has been marked by movements, a word used to describe how God's Spirit has moved upon individuals and groups of people with a particular mission. Usually such a movement has emphasized one of the seven areas mentioned above, bringing a focused renewal to the Church. When one effort has waned, a new movement stressing another area has emerged.

1. The Apostolic Movement
The apostolic movement was started by the Lord Himself, by calling the twelve disciples in the first century of Christian era, as a Remnant of Israel. After the Cross - the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus-after the ten days of ongoing repentance and devotion to God, and after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them, the disciples of Jesus, along with another group of about “a hundred and twenty” became the first spiritual movement in the history of Christianity. This movement is characterized by all seven characteristics of Jesus life.

2. The Contemplative Movement - Devotion to God
In the fourth century men and women fled city life to found cloisters and monasteries where they emphasized the importance of solitude, meditation, and prayer. . . . The Church was strengthened by their emphasis upon intimacy with Christ.

3. The Social Justice Movement - Compassion toward all people
In the late twelfth century Francis of Assisi and a group of followers abandoned their former lives and went about Italian countryside, caring for the sick, the poor and the lame. . . . Their impact on disease and poverty was remarkable, and they became an example of a social justice movement.

4. The Evangelical Movement - Proclamation of the good news of the gospel
In the sixteen century Martin Luther and others proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ after discovering its message anew in the Bible. This message of hope and victory was expressed by clergy and laity in sermons, mission efforts, and personal witnessing.

5. The Charismatic Movement - Empowerment by the Spirit
In the seventeen century the Church witnessed a new outbreak of the Holy Spirit in the lives of men and women who were called “Quakers,” led by the ministry of George Fox. The active presence of the Spirit in the lives of believers became the empowering principle behind scores of conversions. The active role of the Holy Spirit was at the center of their worship . . . and propelled them into evangelism, missions, and social concern.

6. The Holiness Movement - Virtue in thought, word, and action
In the early eighteen century John Wesley and his friends formed a group nicknamed the “Holy Club” and began focusing on moral laxity and the need for the Christian to overcome sinful habits. . . . The purifying effects of the Methodist effort were dramatic and it became a holiness movement.
7. The Incarnational Movement - Uniting the physical and spiritual
In the eighteenth century Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf allowed remnants of
the persecuted Moravian Church to build the village of Herrnhut on his estate. Initially
divided, the group became unified when they experienced a powerful outpouring of the
Holy Spirit after Zinzendorf led them in daily Bible studies and in formulating the
“Brotherly Agreement.” The Moravians joyfully served God - praying, evangelizing, and
helping others—in the midst of baking, teaching, weaving, and raising families.

Avoid Extremes
While each of these spiritual movements was rooted in the life of Christ, as
“movements,” they were sometimes given to extremes. Within each one there were
adherents who overemphasized their particular area of strength. That lack of balance is
still common in the Church today. We see, for example,

The contemplative who forgets the need of the world and fails to do creative work
The moralist who focuses on sin and neglects compassion for others
The Bible-study enthusiast or the evangelist, who feels no need for the Holy Spirit
The charismatic who seeks the gifts of the Spirit and neglects the Giver of the gifts or
neglects to proclaim the gospel.
The social activist who is busy changing the world but who forgets to listen to God
The active and practical Christian (school teacher, for example) who reveals harmful sins
in secret.

Seminar #20 Week 1 Seven Weeks of Spiritual Disciplines for
Practicing the Presence of God

Benefits of Practicing the Spiritual Disciplines
(This can be found in chapter 5)

PRAYER SAVES MODEL

P
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S A V E S

PRAYING TO GOD
RECONCILING WITH GOD
ASKING GOD
YIELDING TO GOD
EXERCISING FAITH IN GOD
REJOICING IN GOD
SAVED BY GOD

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A genuine spiritual life is a life of prayer in which the soul is seeking God for reconciliation, fellowship and salvation. Salvation is God’s free gift through Christ, and is obtained within an authentic relationship with the Heavenly Father, and by faith in Christ’s atoning sacrifice. The salvation of our lives was the main purpose of Jesus sacrifice on the cross, and has to be our first purpose in life. We must “seek God first” every day, through prayer and other spiritual disciplines in order to experience, repentance, confession of our sins, forgiveness, and reconciliation. As we learn to approach God with fear and joy, we encounter Him in His Word, we hear Him speaking to our souls, and we learn to experience His divine, unique and saving presence. We must experience God’s presence and maintain a sense of His presence every day, and every moment, so that the assurance of salvation would be a wonderful and permanent reality for us, as life itself is a beautiful reality.

What follows is a sample of the weekly outline program for the participants. Because of the big volume of seminars the other weekly programs will not be introduced.

Learning to Pray

We learn to pray from:
- our Lord Jesus Christ
- the Holy Spirit
- the holy men and women of God we encounter in the Bible
- godly people around us
- our own experience

For the next 7 weeks we will follow mainly the PRAYER SAVES MODEL which covers our essentials needs in our relationship with God and with one another. The main purpose of this program is to have our relationship with God, with ourselves, and with others restored and to experience the assurance of salvation. The Practice of God’s Presence is the core of everything. In other words, what we plan is to learn and enhance our walk with God until His presence is a permanent and joyful reality in our lives, the source of our restored relationships, and the foundation of our entire Spiritual Life. Every Spiritual Discipline has additional forms that help us to apply it more specifically and beneficially.

Prayer and Study are the first spiritual practices we will learn to practice more deeply-for the next two weeks. The main objective of these two spiritual disciplines is to practice an openness and awareness of God’s presence in a new and intentional way.

The Teacher we learn from is our Lord Jesus Christ.

First week: (24-30 December, 2006)
- Hymnal #251 “He Lives
- Psalm 1
- The Prodigal Son - Luke 15
- Luke 22-24
**Commit to your memory the hymnal and Psalm 1**

We are supposed to repeat (cover) all the above every day-for a week-within the use of devotional method of Bible Study.

**Second week:** (31 Dec-06 January, 2006)
- Hymnal # 485 “I must tell Jesus”
- Psalm 51
- Genesis 32
- Jesus Prayer in Gethsemane–Matt 26:36-46
- Luke 22-24

**Commit to your memory hymnal 485 and Psalm 51**

We are supposed to repeat (cover) all the above every day-for a week-within the use of devotional method of Bible Study.

**PRAYER**

Prayer—prayer is personal communion and dialogue with the Living God. Prayer is an opportunity and a privilege rather than a burden or a duty. It is the meeting place where we draw near to God to receive his grace, to release our burdens and fears, and to be honest with the Lord. Prayer should not be limited to structured times but should also become an ongoing dialogue with God as we practice his presence in the context of our daily activities.

The concept of communicating with God, of talking directly and openly with him just as we would talk with an intimate friend, is one of the great truths of Scripture. But prayer and action are complementary, not contradictory, and it is wise to overlap them as much as possible. Christian service is most effective when prayer not only precedes it but also flows together with it.

Prayer enhances our fellowship and intimacy with God (psalm 116:1-2; Jeremiah 33:2-3).

The Scriptures command us to pray (Luke 18:1; Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:16-18; 1 Tim 2:1).

When we pray, we follow the example of Christ and other great people in Scripture like Moses and Elijah (Mark 1:35; Num 11:2; 1 Kgs 18:36-37).

Prayer appropriates God’s power for our lives (John 15:5; Acts 4:31; Eph 3:16; Col 4:2-4).

We receive special help from God when we pray (Heb 4:16).

Prayer makes a genuine difference (Luke 11:9-10; Jas 5:16-18). As William Temple observed, “When I pray, coincidences happen; when I don’t they don’t.”

Prayer develops our understanding and knowledge of God (Ps 37:3-6; 63:1-8; Eph 1:16-19).

Our prayers and God’s answers give us joy and peace in our hearts (John 16:23-24; Philippians 4:6-7). Our problems may not disappear, but in prayer we gain a new perspective on our problems along with the peace and patience to stand firm.

Prayer helps us understand and accomplish God’s purposes for our lives (Col 1:9-11).
Prayer changes our attitudes and desire (2 Cor 12:7-9). (Confirmed to His Image, p. 93-94).

Suggestions for Enhancing Your Practice of Prayer

**Choose the best time.** Select a particular time of the day, and dedicate it only to personal prayer.

**Choose the best place.** Select a place where there will be a minimum of interruptions and distractions if possible, pray away from your phone and your desk. When the weather and your schedule permit, you may want to try praying during a walk.

**Set a minimum time for daily prayer.** Try to be realistic, don’t attempt too much at first, or your prayer life will become mechanical and discouraging. Start with a few minutes and gradually build from there.

**Be consistent.** Regard your prayer time as a daily appointment you have made with God and respect it as such.

**Focus on the person of God.** It is a good practice to read or meditate upon passage of scripture and then to concentrate your attention on the presence of Christ in your life. Rest in his presence, “casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you” (1 Pet 5:7).

**Come before him in humility.** You are in the unmediated presence of the holy God who is like a blazing light and a consuming fire, before who all things are manifest.

**Come expectantly to the throne.** The significance of prayer is not what we are asking but the person we are addressing. Come in simplicity and trust like a child to a father.

**Pray at all times in the Spirit.** Our prayers should be initiated and energized by the Holy Spirit, who “intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” (Romans 8:27).

**Strive for a balanced diet.** Our prayers should incorporate all the elements of confession, adoration, supplication (intercession and petition), and thanksgiving. We are usually short on adoration and thanksgiving.

**Pray Scripture back to God.** By personalizing passages of Scripture and offering them back to the Lord, you integrate them in your life and experience and think God’s thoughts after him.

**Do not do all the talking.** Practice times of silence before the Lord so that you can be sensitive to the promptings of his Spirit. Be responsive to him by confessing any areas of exposed sin, interceding for others, praying for wisdom, and submitting to his desires.

**Make prayer a part of your relationships with people.** Personal prayer is crucial, but it must not crowd out corporate prayer. Prayer should be a part of the home and part of Christian friendships. Great benefit can be derived from setting up a prayer partnership with another person, a prayer cell with a few people, a prayer fellowship with several people, or a prayer group in the church.

**Plan special times of prayer during the year.**

**Practice the presence of God.** “We should desire not only to have one or more times that are formally dedicated to prayer during the day but also to be conscious of the presence of God throughout the day. In this way, each task is rendered in his name and done in conscious dependence upon him. When ministry becomes a substitute for prayer, it becomes self-dependent and ineffective.”
The Devotional Method of Bible Study

This method involves taking a passage of the Bible, large or small, and prayerfully meditating on it until the Holy Spirit shows you a way to apply its truth to your own life in a way that is personal, possible, and provable. The goal is for you to take seriously the Word of God and “do what it says” (Jas 1:22).

Any Bible Study should be directed or followed by these questions:
- What does this passage tell me about God?
- What does this passage tell me about me and God?
- How does this passage help me walk with God?
- What is the application this passage urges me to make?
- How is this application helping me to become more like Jesus?

Devotional Study Plan

1. Prayer: Ask God to help you apply the Scripture you are studying and show you specifically what He wants you to do.
2. Reading: Read the Scripture with reverence and proper pace to allow the Holy Spirit to communicate God’s will, to impress you and speak to you.
3. Meditation: Meditate on the verse or verses you have chosen for the study. Meditation is reading the passage in the Bible, and then concentrating on it in different ways. Visualizing the scene of the narrative in your mind, emphasizing words in the passage under study, paraphrasing the passage, personalizing the passage and praying the verse or passage back to God are some of the ways of meditation.
4. Application: Write out an application of the insights you have discovered through your meditation. The application should be personal, practical, possible, provable, and according to God’s will as expressed in His Word. Application is obeying God’s word, or putting it into practice. Application is absolutely necessary. The study of the Word of God without practical application can be just an academic exercise with no spiritual value. We should apply the Word in our lives because it is Word that changes us to be more with the will of God and to be confirmed to the image of Christ.
5. Memorization: Memorize a key verse from your study or the entire passage. Memorization is storing the Word of God in your mind so that you will have it with you wherever you are and live on it in every circumstance.
6. Developing a devotional journal: Keeping a record of a journey with one’s best friend. “Expression deepens impression.” One of the best ways to develop a closer walk with God is to journal, to write down the insights you gain from reading the Bible or other spiritual books.
How to Study the Bible

Relationships are built on mutual communication. This involves listening and talking. We learn about the other person through listening, and we share our inner selves through speaking about the things that matter to us. But a difficulty arises when it comes to our relationship with God. How do you talk to someone you cannot hear, see, or touch? How do you listen to someone you cannot hear, see, or touch? The talking to God part is not so strange. We can do that in prayer. But how do we listen to a God whose voice we cannot hear? The place where we can most clearly hear the voice of God today is in His written Word. So a foundational step toward a living relationship with God begins with serious time in the study of God’s word and in other writings of high spiritual value, such as those of Ellen White No Spiritual Discipline is more important than the intake of God’s Word. Nothing can substitute for it. There simply is no healthy Christian life apart from a diet of the milk and meat of Scripture. The reasons for this are obvious. In the Bible God tells us about himself and especially about Jesus Christ, the incarnation of God. The Bible unfolds the Law of God to us and shows us how we’ve all broken it. There we learn how Christ died as a sinless, willing Substitute for breakers of God’s Law and how we must repent and believe in him to be right with God.

Informational Versus Formation Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informational Reading</th>
<th>Formational Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeks to cover as much as possible-Reads for quantity and speed</td>
<td>Concerned with quality-Reads for meaning-The point is meeting God in the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A linear process-Move through parts in a linear style</td>
<td>An in-depth process-Allow the text to be God’s Word for us, to address us, to encounter us, to affect us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeks to master the text-Seeks to bring it under our control, and use it to impose our agenda on to the world</td>
<td>Allows the text to master us-We come to the text with the openness to hear, to receive, to respond, to be a servant of the Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The text as a object to use-As a result we are subjects and all else are objects for us to control as we choose</td>
<td>The text as a subject that shapes us-We are ready for the Word to exercise control over us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical, critical, and judgmental approach-All we read is evaluated for its enhancement of our false self</td>
<td>Humble, detached, receptive, and loving and yielding approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving mentality-We need to read to find out something that will work for us</td>
<td>Openness to mystery-Open to God-We come to stand before that mystery and allow it to address us</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Devotional Study Form

Date: Bible Reading (Passage):

1. Prayer
   Before
   During studying
   At the end
   During the day for applying

2. Reading

3. Meditation
   • What does this passage tell me about God?
   • What does this passage tell me about me and God?
   • How does this passage help me walk with God?

4. Application
   • What is the application this passage urges me to make?
   • How is this application helping me to become more like Jesus?

5. Memorization

6 Journaling
   • In what ways did God discover His will and presence in today’s devotional time?
   • In what ways has God been present in my life today?
   • My answer to His love and presence (at the end of the day) is:

Seminar #22 Third Week – Cultivating a Sense of God’s Presence
Meditation 7-13 January, 2007

The Spiritual Practice of Meditation—Contemplation

Meditation is commanded by God (Josh 1:8). The kind of meditation encouraged in the Bible differs from other kinds of meditation in several ways. While some advocate a kind of meditation in which you do your best to empty your mind, Christian meditation involves filling your mind with God and truth.

Meditation is spending time with God in quietness and usually alone. It is drawing close to God and listening to Him, pondering on His Word, His Character, His Law, His Plan of Salvation, His Kingdom, His Creation, His Mighty Acts or other aspects of His Self-Revelation.

“Christian meditation is the ability to hear God’s voice and obey his word. This in brief, forms the biblical foundation for meditation” (Foster, 17-18).

“Meditation goes beyond hearing, reading, studying, and even memorizing as a means of taking in God’s Word. Occasional thoughts about God are not meditation. ‘A man may think on God every day’, said William Bridge, ‘and meditate on God no day.’
God calls us through the Scriptures to develop the practice of dwelling on Him in our thoughts” (Whitney, 61).

I. The Purpose and Importance of Meditation

“The only safety for any of us is to plant our feet upon the Word of God and study the Scriptures, making God's Word our constant meditation” (TDG, 292). “The soul united with God in meditation of his unfathomable riches, is expanded, and becomes more capable of comprehending to a greater depth and height the glories of the plan of salvation” (RH, August 10, 1911, par. 2). “In meditation we give Christ room, full access into the depth of our being to create a inner sanctuary in the heart. Meditation calls us to enter into the living presence of God for ourselves. To be in the presence of God is to change” (Foster, 17-24). “We must have periods of rest, times set apart for meditation and prayer and for spiritual refreshing” (21 MR, 70). “We should spend a portion of the Sabbath in religious meditation, and in considering the blessings and wonders of God in his created works” (ST, February 28, 1878, par. 12). “By study, contemplation, and prayer God's people will be elevated above common, earthly thoughts and feelings, and will be brought into harmony with Christ and His great work of cleansing the sanctuary above from the sins of the people” (5T 575). “A mere superficial reading of the inspired word will be of little advantage; for every statement made in the sacred pages requires thoughtful contemplation” (CE, 100.2). 

Christ and His purity and His matchless charms should be the soul’s contemplation” (TSB, 87).

1. Meditation on God’s Character and Love

“On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night” (Ps 63:6). “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You” (Isa 26:3, NKJV).

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor 3:18).

“I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken” (Ps 16:8); “Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love” (Ps 48:9). “But we can enjoy the contemplation of God, and the sense of His presence. We can know of Him all that human beings can bear. We can talk with Him in prayer” (Sp TB, 07 7). “Those who walk in the fear of God, meditating upon His character, will daily become more and more like Christ” (TDG, 40.1).

2. Meditation on God’s Word

“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Josh 1:8).

“I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation” (Ps 119:99).

“My eyes stay open through the watches of the night that I may meditate on your promises” (Ps 119:148).

“I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word” (Ps 119:15-16).
“Let the truth of God be the subject for contemplation and meditation. The Bible is God's letter to man...Then will you find inspiration, and that wisdom which is divine” (PH, 152 35).

“But in order to reach the highest attainments in the divine life, the mind must be occupied with contemplation of the Word of God, that you may know what the will of God is, and become a doer of the words of Christ. This is represented by Christ as eating his flesh and drinking his blood” (PH, 152 37).

3. Meditation on Christ, the Cross and the Plan of Salvation

This is an extension of meditating on the character of God, because the character of God is mostly displayed at the cross.

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:2).

“Let Jesus be lifted up. Let the great truths connected with the salvation of man be the theme of your meditation day and night” (PH, 028 27).

“It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit” (DA, 83).

“Keep your eyes fixed on Christ. Study His life—a life filled with goodness, grace, and truth. Follow His example. Ask yourself, Am I, in purpose and character, like Christ. The contemplation of the Savior will attract you more and more strongly to Him. It is the beholding of the love of Jesus that gives light and life to the soul” (7 MR, 151).

“Let the mind dwell upon His love, upon the beauty, the perfection, of His character. Christ in His self-denial, Christ in His humiliation, Christ in His purity and holiness, Christ in His matchless love—this is the subject for the soul’s contemplation. It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness” (RC, 259).

4. Meditation on God’s Law

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night” (Ps 1:1-2).

“Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long” (Ps 119:97).

“I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways” (Ps 119:15).

“Though rulers sit together and slander me, your servant will meditate on your decrees. Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors” (Ps 119:23-24).

“I lift up my hands to your commands, which I love, and I meditate on your decrees” (Ps 119:48).

“How careful would you be in meditating upon the law of God, and in comparing your life with its claims. How fearful would you be lest you sin in word or deed, and how earnest to grow in grace and true holiness” (2 T 291).
5. Meditation on God's Creation

“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?” (Ps 8:3-4).

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge” (Ps 19:1-4; see also Ps 104:1-34; Luke 12:24-27).

6. Meditation on God's Providence—His Mighty Acts

“I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds” (Ps 77:12).

“I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done” (Ps 143:5).

“They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works” (Ps 145:5).

7. Meditation on the “Things Above” — on the Kingdom Heaven

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things” (Col 3:1-2).

“All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth . . . such things show that they are looking for a country of their own . . . they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one” (Heb 11:13-6).

II. Jesus and Meditation

The life of our Lord Jesus Christ was a life of continue meditation. Although the word meditation does not appear in the following passages, it is more than sure that in those instances, while He was praying or worshiping, He also was meditating. When He was twelve years old (Luke 2:41-50) Jesus would meditate on the sacrificial lamb and its significance, for His life; in the wilderness of temptation (Matt 4:1-2), He would meditate on the mission He was about to start; before designating the twelve as apostles (Luke 6:12-13), Jesus would think of the importance of that act and its impact upon the world.; in Gethsemane (Luke 22:38-45), He would mediate upon the consequences of His sacrifice for Himself and for the world. In all these examples and in others as well Jesus did more than simply praying or facing a temptation; He would think in all those moments, deeply, at His mission and how He would face those events connected to His mission. Mark 1:35 characterizes very well His life of prayer and meditation. Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

“Often before break of day, while the disciples were still sleeping, Christ arose to meditate and pray. He refreshed His spiritual strength by communion with God” (18 MR, 83).

“Jesus had often resorted to Gethsemane with his disciples for meditation and prayer” (ST, August 14, 1879, par. 1).
“His moral powers were strengthened by his meditation and communion with God” (YI, September 1, 1873, par. 8).

III. Examples of People Meditating
A. Isaac: “He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching” (Gen 24:63).
B. Joshua: “Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the LORD, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads” (Josh 6:7).
C. David: “Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long” (Ps 119:97; see also Ps 39:2-4).
D. Mary, the mother of Jesus: “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19).
E. Job 22:22.
G. Enoch: “The infinite, unfathomable love of God through Christ became the subject of his meditation day and night; and with all the fervor of his soul he sought to reveal that love to the people among whom he dwelt” (CC, 28).
H. “John the Baptist in his desert life was taught of God. . . . By day and by night, Christ was his study, his meditation, until mind and heart and soul were filled with the glorious vision. He looked upon the King in His beauty, and self was lost sight of” (CC, 272).

IV. The Results of Meditation
Understanding and Wisdom (Ps 119:97-99; 119:27)
Praise and Worship (Ps 48:9-10; 63:5-6; 104:33-35; 119:97)
Prosperity and Success (Josh 1:8)
Delight in the Lord (Ps 1:2; see also 119:15-16, 23-24, 77-78)
Love (Ps 18:1-6; 116:1-6; 119:97)
Confidence and Faith (Ps 16:8)
Obedience (Ps 119:11; 119:55)
Transformation (2 Cor 3:18)

“In Christ the character of the Father was made manifest, and, by contemplation of Christ, we may be changed into the same image” (ST, May 18, 1891, par. 6).
“When we make redemption the subject of our meditation, and try to comprehend the vastness of the plan of salvation, and to realize the unutterable love of Him who has died for us, our hearts will be subdued and softened, and we shall yield them wholly to our Savior. We shall fall at his feet in adoration, exclaiming, ‘My Lord and my God!’” (ST, January 13, 1888, par. 3)
“As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit” (DA, 83).
V. A Suggestive Plan for Meditation

Master
Expect
Discipline
Imagination
Time
Ask
Trust
Implement
Offer
Note

**Master**: First, master the Scripture passage you read in order to understand the context. A misunderstanding about the meaning of a verse leads to misguided application of it. For meditation, choose a brief passage that is meaningful to you. When you do not have enough time, you may read less in order to meditate more. A story, a characteristic of God’s character, a command, a principle, a divine invitation, a promise, a warning... One or two verses can become the theme of one day’s meditation.

**Expect**: By prayer and worship develop an attitude of openness to God, and wait for His presence and guidance. In order to better meditate and experience God’s presence seek solitude and silence. Expect to have an encounter with God and discover His will.

**Discipline**: Discipline yourself to ponder each word and phrase of the text, and focus your mind only on the Word (avoid any distraction) trying to gain as many insights of God to minister to you through this process. The only way to develop skills in meditation is by disciplining yourself to doing it, even when it does not seem to be effective. According to Whitney, one of the most consistent ways to select a passage for meditation is to discern the main message of (one of) the section(s) of your encounter with the Scripture and meditate on its meaning and application. Repeat it in Different Ways. This method takes the verse or phrase of Scripture and turns it like a diamond to examine every facet. Example: A meditation on Jesus words at the beginning of John 11:25 would look like this:

“I am the resurrection and the life.”
“I am the resurrection and the life.”
“I am the resurrection and the life.”
“I am the resurrection and the life.”
“I am the resurrection and the life.”
“I am the resurrection and the life.”
“I am the resurrection and the life.”
“I am the resurrection and the life.”

The point is not simply to repeat vainly each word of the verse until they’ve all been emphasized. The purpose is to think deeply upon the light (truth) that flashes into your mind each time the verse is turned.

**Imagination**: Use your imagination and begin to visualize the concepts in the text in as many ways as you can. Put yourself into the words and into the historical context of the verse.
Time: Don’t rush—Take Time. Select specific times for brief interludes of meditation on the text you have chosen for the day. After you left the place of your meditation, discipline yourself to “stay your mind on God” and meditate on Him and His Word throughout the day. Meditation directs the conscious mind during the day and is in an excellent way to practice the presence of God. The H.W.L.W. habit—His Word the Last Word before retiring programs the subconscious mind during the night (Psalm 63:6; Proverbs 6:22).

Ask Application Questions:
- What does this passage tell me about God?
- What does this passage tell me about me and God?
- How does this passage help me walk with God?

In order to meditate more intensively, use the six great observation questions:
Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? The following sample questions give you ideas on how to do this. Use as few or as many as are helpful, and think of other questions also:

C. Who in this passage responded to God?
D. What is God like in attributes, attitudes, desires?
E. What does He want to do for me? What does He want me to do?
   When should I respond to God in this way?
F. Where should I envision myself as God’s child? Where does God promise to be?
G. Why is it important for God and me to be more intimately involved with each other?
H. How does God feel about me? How did some person in this passage relate to God?
I. How can I more effectively respond to God?

Trust: Trust the Lord and His message for your life.

Implement: The Bible promises the blessing of God on those who apply the Word of God to their lives (Jas 1:22-25).
Personalize the passage by putting it in the first person and praying it back to God. Commit yourself to pursue and apply the truths you have found in it. Obedience should be our personal response to the Lord, as an immediate result of our meditation.
An encounter with God through meditation on His Word should result in at least one specific response. That response may be an explicit act of faith and obedience. It may take the form of confession and repentance or asking someone’s forgiveness or speaking a word of encouragement. The response may involve the forsaking of a sin or showing an act of love. Regardless of the nature or that response, consciously commit yourself to at least one action to take following your time of meditation on God’s Word.

Offer: Offer your entire life to God in adoration, praise, thanksgiving, and worship for His wonderful Word and character.

Note: Pay careful attention to the way the Lord came and encountered you during the time of meditation, and write down your discoveries, insights, experience, and decision.
Seminar #23—Fourth Week—Willingness to follow God’s Will
Confession and Journaling
14-20 January, 2007

Spiritual Journal
Although the practice of journaling is not commanded in Scripture, it is modeled. And God has blessed the use of journals since Bible times.

Benefits of Keeping a Spiritual Journal
1. Growth in self-understanding
2. An aid to the devotional life
3. Guidance and decision making
4. Making sense and order of life
5. Releasing emotions and gaining perspective
6. Greater awareness of daily life
7. Self-expression and creativity
8. Clarifying beliefs
9. Setting goals and managing your time
10. Working through problems (Klug, 1993 ed., p. 18-26)
11.

Keeping a journal is one of the disciplines that help us to grow in grace. It is well known that most of the great spiritual leaders throughout history kept spiritual diaries. Among them are Ellen G. White, Martin Luther, John Wesley, George Whitefield, John Woolman, David Brainerd, Blaise Pascal, David Livingstone, Frank Lauback and others."

Examples of Spiritual Journals or Diaries

George Whitefield’ Diary
Have I,
1. Been fervent in prayer?
2. Use stated hours of prayer?
3. Used prayers each hour?
4. After or before every deliberate conversation or action, considered how it might tend to God’s glory?
5. After any pleasure, immediately giving thanks?
6. Planned business for the day?
7. Been simple and recollect in everything?
8. Been zealous in undertaking and active in doing what good I could?
9. Been meek, cheerful, affable in everything I said or did?
10. Been proud, vain unchaste, or enviable of others?
11. Recollected in eating and drinking? Thankful? Temperate in sleep?
12. Taken time for giving thanks according to (William) Law’s rules?
13. Been diligent in study
14. Thought or spoken unkindly of anyone?
15. Confessed all sins?
Each day’s entry in Whitefield’s Diary is in two parts, one page per part. On the first page he would list specific activities of his day, then evaluate each on the basis of his fifteen questions. On the second page, according to his biographer, Arnold Dallimore, “He records any unusual activity throughout the day, but above all, gives expression to his inner self. The longing of his soul, a searching of his motives, severe self reproach for the slightest wrong and bursts of praise to God, are all recorded without inhibition.”... It is believed that for Whitefield, part of the secret of becoming so unusually confirmed to the image of Christ was of the use of Spiritual Discipline of journaling to maintain self accountability for his spiritual goals and priorities (Whitney in Dallimore, 80-81).

Frank Laubach’s Diary
One of the most profound diaries which come down to us is that of Frank Laubach. His spiritual journal took the form of an ongoing dialogue with God. All His insights, plans, experiences are part of his conversations with His best and ever present Friend.

January, 1937
Friday 1
Nagpur (India)
God, I want to give You every minute of this year. I shall try to keep You in mind every moment of my waking hours. I shall try to let my hand write what You direct. I shall try to let You be the speaker and direct every word. I shall try to let You direct my acts. I shall try to learn Your language as it was taught by Jesus and all the others through whom You speak—in beauty and singing birds and cool breezes, in radiant Christlike faces, in sacrifices and in tears. It will cost not only much, but everything that conflicts with this resolve.

Suggestive Thoughts for Free Journaling

1. Sit quietly and comfortable for several minutes while the mind and body relax and become focused.
2. Allow the events of the past day to come quietly to mind and write down what impresses you the most, what is your most important discovery or experience. Or ask yourself the questions form the Spiritual Journal Model below and write the answer to them.
3. Date the entry and begin writing, allowing your thoughts to flow as seems right.
4. Write until you have said all that flows naturally from your mind.
5. Return to the journal to read your entries at regular intervals.

(Adapted from Steve Willsey, 157, 158)

The Book of God’s Providence in my Life

I. My book of insights
- What does this passage tell me about God?
- What does this passage tell me about me and God?
- How does this passage help me walk with God?
- In what ways did God discover His will and presence in today’s devotional time?
II. My book of experience
- In what ways has God been present in my life today?
- What about the assurance of my salvation?
- How was my relationship with the Lord?
- What about the influence of my life towards the salvation of others?
- How was my relationship with others?
- Has God been glorified today by my thinking, speaking and acting?
- How was my relationship with the Lord?
- Is there anything that I thought, spoke or did which has dishonored Him?
- How did I represent Him in my relationships with others?

III. My Letter to God
- My answer to His love, protection and presence (at the end of the day) is,
- My sorrow and confession for my mistakes, sins and failures
- My commitment and hope for the future

The Spiritual Practice of Confession

"Confession is both a grace and a discipline. It is grace because is given by God and it is a discipline because there are things we must do. It is a consciously course of action that brings us under the shadow of the Almighty” (Foster, 145).

The Spiritual Practice of Confession is directly linked to Repentance, Forgiveness, Faith in God’s Promises, and Victory over sin.

“Once we are transparent and vulnerable, once we uncover and name our secrets, failures, and weaknesses, they lose their dominion over us, and the practice of confession sets us free from the burden of hidden sin” (Confirmed to His Image, 84).

“When true confession is accomplished all human relationships are changed positively. It is confession that makes deep fellowship possible, and it the lack of it explains why there is so much of superficiality in Christian relationships” (Spirit of Disciplines, 188).

Alphonsus Liguory writes, “For a good confession three things are necessary: an examination of conscience, sorrow, and determination to avoid sin” (Foster, 150).

For an authentic and complete confession the sinner needs to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, in turn, uses the Word of God, the Law of God and the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Once the sinner is exposed to the Word, the Law, and the Character of the Lord Jesus, his conscience would be moved to sorrow, confession, and conversion.

Confession of sin, public or private, should be heartfelt and freely expressed.

It is not to be urged from the sinner. It is not to be made in a flippant and careless way, or forced from those who have no realizing sense of the abhorrent character of sin. The confession that is the outpouring of the inmost soul finds its way to the God of infinite pity. The psalmist says, “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a contrite spirit” (Ps 34:18; SC, 37).

Prayer and confession are to be offered only to Him who has entered once for all into the holy place. Christ has declared, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1). He will save to the uttermost all who come to Him in faith (FLB, 105).
Confession as a result of drawing near to Jesus.
So will it be with all who behold Christ. The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves. There will be a continual reaching out of the soul after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the heart before Him. At every advance step in our Christian experience our repentance will deepen. We shall know that our sufficiency is in Christ alone and shall make the apostle's confession our own: “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.” “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Rom 7:18; Gal 6:14; AA, 561).

The great heart of Infinite Love is drawn toward the sinner with boundless compassion... He wants to restore His moral image in man. As you draw near to Him with confession and repentance, He will draw near to you with mercy and forgiveness (AG, 82).

Confession must be specific.
True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as to be brought before God only; they may be wrongs that should be confessed to individuals who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a public character, and should then be as publicly confessed. But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty (SC 38).

Do not pour into human ears the story which God alone should hear.
Many, many confessions should never be spoken in the hearing of mortals; for the result is that which the limited judgment of finite beings does not anticipate. . . God will be better glorified if we confess the secret, inbred corruption of the heart to Jesus alone than if we open its recesses to finite, erring man, who cannot judge righteously unless his heart is constantly imbued with the Spirit of God (FLB, 128).

Confession—Repentance—Reformation
Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. The work that we have to do on our part is plainly set before us: “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow” (Isa 1:16, 17). "If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die" (Ezekiel 33:15). The humble and broken heart, subdued by genuine repentance, will appreciate something of the love of God and the cost of Calvary; and as a son confesses to a loving father, so will the truly penitent bring all his sins before God. And it is written, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9; SC 41).
Examples from God’s Word
The examples in God’s word of genuine repentance and humiliation reveal a spirit of confession in which there is no excuse for sin or attempt at self-justification. Paul did not seek to shield himself; he paints his sin in its darkest hue, not attempting to lessen his guilt. He says, “Many of the saints did I shut up in prison . . . and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them . . . I punished them oft in every synagogue . . . I persecuted them even unto strange cities” (Acts 26:10, 11). He does not hesitate to declare that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Tim 1:15; SC 41).

It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now (FLB, 333).

“Achan acknowledged his guilt, but when it was too late for the confession to benefit himself. . . . There is a vast difference between admitting facts after they have been proved and confessing sins known only to ourselves and to God. Achan would not have confessed had he not hoped by so doing to avert the consequences of his crime. . . . There was no genuine repentance for sin, no contrition, no change of purpose, no abhorrence of evil” (CC, 121).

Confession and Judgment
So confessions will be made by the guilty when they stand before the bar of God, after every case has been decided for life or death. . . . When the records of heaven shall be opened, the Judge will not in words declare to man his guilt, but will cast one penetrating, convicting glance, and every deed, every transaction of life, will be vividly impressed upon the memory of the wrongdoer. The person will not . . . need to be hunted out . . . but his own lips will confess his shame. The sins hidden from the knowledge of men will then be proclaimed to the whole world (CC, 121). If you have sins to confess, lose no time. These moments are golden. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9; CC, 121).

Confession and Faith
Yes, only believe that God is your helper. He wants to restore His moral image in man. As you draw near to Him with confession and repentance, He will draw near to you with mercy and forgiveness (SC 55).

Your sins may be as mountains before you; but if you humble your heart, and confess your sins, trusting in the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, He will forgive, and will cleanse you from all unrighteousness. . . . Desire the fullness of the grace of Christ. Let your heart be filled with an intense longing for His righteousness (FLB 128).

Confession and the Spirit of Forgiveness
After completing the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus added: “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matt 6:14-15). He who is unforgiving cuts off the very channel through which alone he can receive mercy from God. We should not think that unless those who have injured us confess the wrong we are justified in
withholding from them our forgiveness. It is their part, no doubt, to humble their hearts by repentance and confession; but we are to have a spirit of compassion toward those who have trespassed against us, whether or not they confess their faults (FLB, 131). “Nothing can justify an unforgiving spirit. He who is unmerciful toward others shows that he himself is not a partaker of God’s pardoning grace” (FLB, 131). We are not forgiven because we forgive, but as we forgive. The ground of all forgiveness is found in the unmerited love of God, but by our attitude toward others we show whether we have made that love our own. Wherefore Christ says, “With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged” (FLB, 131).

Seminar #24
Fifth Week – Exercising Faith In God – Remaining Constantly In His Presence
Confession and Witnessing
January, 21-27, 2007

Witnessing
“No sooner does one come to Christ than there is born in his heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart. If we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ and are filled with the joy of His indwelling Spirit, we shall not be able to hold our peace. If we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good we shall have something to tell. Like Philip when he found the Saviour, we shall invite others into His presence. We shall seek to present to them the attractions of Christ and the unseen realities of the world to come. There will be an intensity of desire to follow in the path that Jesus trod. There will be an earnest longing that those around us may ‘behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’” (John 1:29; SC, 78-79).

“Our work has been marked out for us by our Heavenly Father. We are to take our Bibles, and go forth to warn the world. We are to be God’s helping hands in saving souls –channels through which His love is day-by-day to flow to the perishing” (9T, 150).

Our Common Objections
We should also acknowledge the common objection of the lack of time.
Do we really want to say that we are too busy to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ to make disciples of unbelievers (Matthew 28:19-20)? Do we expect that at the Judgment Jesus will excuse us from the single most important responsibility He gave to us because we say, “I didn’t have time”? Some fear witnessing because they don’t feel confident enough in their persuasive powers of their ability to answer all imaginable objections to the gospel. But the power for evangelism is not in our ability; it is in His gospel. The power for evangelism is not in our ability; it is in His gospel.
Since evangelism is a Discipline, will you plan for it? (Whitney, p. 107, 112).

The Importance of Witnessing
Witnessing is important for God to be made known and proclaimed to the world (Isa 6:8). It is important for God’s children to be involved in the greatest mission under the sun; to
represent God to the world and to cooperate with Him in the work of saving the lost (Acts 4:20). And it is also extremely important to the lost in order to be brought to the knowledge of truth in order to be saved (Rom 10:14-17).

Sharing the good news about God and Jesus Christ with others is a call, a privilege, and a responsibility of all those who have accepted Christ as personal Savior. It is a task for all God’s people (1 Pet 2:9; 3:15; Acts 8:4).

**Jesus Our Wonderful Example**

“Jesus, the master soul-winner, placed the Kingdom of God first in His own life. He placed priority on this one thing - the eternal salvation of men and women. Even at the cross He made one of life’s wisest choices. God’s one-and-only Son was a soul-winner. There is no higher calling than sharing God’s love with other” (*Light Your World for God*, 24).

“The joy of Christ was that of seeing souls redeemed and saved in His glorious kingdom. Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (4T, 54).

**Our Lifework-Our Mission**

“To save souls should be the lifework of everyone who professes Christ. We are debtors to the world for the grace given us of God, for the light which has shone upon us, and for the discovered beauty and power of the truth” {4T, 53.1).

“Whatever one’s calling in life, his first interest should be to win souls for Christ. He may not be able to speak to congregations, but he can work for individuals. To them he can communicate the instruction received from his Lord. Ministry does not consist alone in preaching. Those minister who relieve the sick and suffering, helping the needy, speaking words of comfort to the desponding and those of little faith”(DA, 822.3).

“The church of Christ is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. Its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. And the obligation rests upon all Christians. Everyone, to the extent of his talent and opportunity, is to fulfill the Saviour’s commission. The love of Christ, revealed to us, makes us debtors to all who know Him not. God has given us light, not for ourselves alone, but to shed upon them” (SC, 81.1).

**Witnessing Is Sharing the Truth of God**

Ps 145:10-12; Luke 24:46-48; see also Matt 27:54; Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47, etc.

**Believers Are Commanded to Witness**

Matt 28:18-19; see also Acts 1:8; 9:15-16

**Witnessing Is a Major Aspect of Christian Living**

Rom 10:9-10; Acts 4:20

**Witnessing Recounts Personal Experience**

Isa 63:7; Dan 4:2; John 9:25; 1 John 1:1; Acts 4:20
Approaches to Witnessing
Scripture provides teaching supported by examples, concerning when believers should witness, the methods they are to use, and the manner of doing it.

1. In the home and family: Mark 5:18-20; Luke 8:38-39
2. To individuals: John 1:40-42; John 4:7:26; Acts 8:30-35
3. To assembled groups: Acts 2:14-41; Acts 5:42; 17:17

Methods of Witnessing
1. Sharing personal testimony: John 4:29; Acts 22:3-8;
3. Using prophetic gifts: 1 Cor 14:24-25

The Manner of Witnessing
1. With Love: Mark 10:21; Phil 1:15-17
2. With Urgency: 2 Cor 5:20; Ezek 33:7-9
3. Fearlessly: Eph 6:19-20; Acts 4:29
4. Clearly and courteously: 1 Pet 3:15; Acts 26:1-3; Col 4:4-6

One of Our Greatest Needs
“The work of God in this earth can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers” (GW, 352).
“There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen” (MH, 143).

Successful Ways of Witnessing for Christ

“Not all can go as missionaries to foreign lands, but all can be home missionaries in their families and neighborhoods. There are many ways in which church members may give the message to those around them. One of the most successful is by living helpful, unselfish Christian lives" (AH, 485).

The only place to begin is where you are. Ask the Lord to place a burden in your heart for a few special persons. Look for opportunities to share what Jesus has done for you. Open your heart and share how Christ has forgiven you and changed your life (Light your World, 25).
Practical Steps to Develop the Attitude of Soul-Winner

1. Ask God to give you the desire to witness
   - Spend time in prayer, study, and meditation and pray that the Lord will give you a greater desire to witness for Him.

2. Ask God for opportunities to witness to specific people
   - Specifically pray that the Lord would place a desire in your heart to witness to a few special people.

3. Ask God to bless those specific people
   - Lift these persons up in prayer; seeking God’s wisdom to approach them

Giving Your Testimony

“There is nothing as influential to convert others as our own testimony of what God has done for us. Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven’s chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine” (DA, 347).

“As witnesses for Christ, we are to tell what we know, what we ourselves have seen and heard and felt. If we have been following Jesus step by step, we shall have something right to the point to tell concerning the way in which He has led us. We can tell how we have tested His promise, and found the promise true. We can bear witness to what we have known of the grace of Christ. This is the witness for which our Lord calls, and for want of which the world is perishing” (DA, 340).

How to Give Your Own Testimony

“I needed help, and I found it in Jesus. Every want was supplied, the hunger of my soul was satisfied; the Bible is to me the revelation of Christ. I believe in Jesus because He is to me a divine Saviour. I believe the Bible because I have found it to be the voice of God to my soul” (8T, 321).

My life before I accepted Christ as personal Savior

“I needed help”

How I became a Christian

“I found it in Jesus. Every want was supplied, the hunger of my soul was satisfied; the Bible is to me the revelation of Christ.”

My life since becoming a Christian

“I believe the Bible because I have found it to be the voice of God to my soul.”

Biblical Example

The two restored demoniacs were the first missionaries whom Christ sent to preach the gospel in the region of Decapolis. For a few moments only, these men had been privileged to hear the teachings of Christ. Not one sermon from His lips had ever fallen upon their ears. They could not instruct the people as the disciples who had been daily with Christ were able to do. But they bore in their own persons the evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. They could tell what they knew; what they themselves had seen, and heard, and felt of the power of Christ. This is what every one can do whose heart has been touched by the grace of God (ChS, 17).
Soul-Winning Ministries
1. Prayer Ministry
2. Literature Ministry
3. Visitation Ministry
4. Bible Study Ministry
5. Video-DVD Ministry
6. Home Evangelistic (Preaching) Ministry
7. Public Evangelistic (Preaching) Ministry

Christ’s Method Alone—The Method of Self-Sacrificing Love
Out of His Divine love our Lord Jesus Christ approached all sinners with only one reason in mind; to save them. His purpose was to win their confidence in God, and to win them back to Himself and His Kingdom. Ellen White summarizes Christ’s approach beautifully, “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me’” (MH 143).

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled (1. sociability) with men as one who desired their good (2. sincerity in motives). He showed His sympathy (3. sympathy) for them, ministered (4. service to the Supreme Sacrifice) to their needs, and won their confidence (Satisfaction-Security). (The result of sociability, sincerity in motives, expression of sympathy, and service was satisfaction and a sense of security in the lives of those people. . . . This way Jesus won their confidence in Him . . . they trusted Him). Then He bade them, “Follow Me.” (Surrender). The final result of this method is Salvation.

Four “S” + Two “S” = Salvation
Sociability
Sincerity
Sympathy
Service to Supreme Sacrifice
These steps bring about Satisfaction and Confidence:
Security
Then, He asked, summoned them, to follow Him, which means:
Surrender
The final result: Salvation

The Reward of Witnessing is Unimaginable
“Well Done, My Child . . . My Friend; Come and Rejoice with Me Forever!”
Seminar #25
Sixth Week – Rejoicing In God – Enjoying His Presence
Celebration
January 27 – February 03, 2007

God’s Presence in my Life

Take time to ponder the three pages of thoughts about God’s presence in your life (past-present-future) and follow the suggestions made there. Learn to celebrate God’s presence in your life, and make a decision to learn to enjoy His presence moment by moment.

God’s Presence in My Life—Part I – Remembering the Past

“In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader” (LS, 196).

1. **Read prayerfully** Isa 41:8-16; 43:1-5; 44:1-5; 21-23

2. **Reflect**—Remembering the past is an essential part of life’s examination. What we are today is mainly the result of what happened in our lives in the past. The Lord Himself invites His people to “remember” and to “review” the past, “Remember these things, O Jacob” (Is 44:21); “Review the past for Me” (Is 43:26). As you read prayerfully the Scripture passages, meditate upon the relationship between God and His people called Jacob or Israel. Listen to the voice of God as He reminds His people about His identity, His choice, His mighty acts, and their own identity. Reflect upon the meaning of God’s statements:

- **My identity** – Who I am: I am your Creator – “I have formed you” (Isa 43:1; 21)
- **My choice** – “I have chosen you” (Is 44:1)
- **Your identity** – Who you are – “You are my servant” (Isa 41:8; 44:21); “I created you, for my glory” (Isa 43:7)
- **My mighty acts** – What I did for you – “I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist” – “I have redeemed you” (Isa 44:22)

Write down all ways God was present and acted in the history of Israel. Describe the presence of God in your own words. What do you admire most?

3. **Apply**—Can you identify yourself with God’s servant Israel? Are you aware that God is your Creator? Are you happy that He has formed you? Do you have the certainty that you also are chosen by God? Has God worked in your past? Sit quietly, perhaps with eyes closed, and recall your past journey. Write down your personal story of salvation, answering the following questions:
- How was my life before I met God? Describe those times when you believe God was absent in your life.
- How I met God, and how did He come and bring salvation into my life? When was I aware for the first time of God’s presence in my life?
- How is my life since then? What are His mighty acts He performed in my past?

When you look back into the chapters of your life experience do you not find some pleasant pages? Are not God's promises, like the fragrant flowers, growing beside your path on every hand? Will you not let their beauty and sweetness fill your heart with joy (SC, 117)?

Reenter your past and trace those key moments when and where God acted for you and your salvation. Make a list of God's mighty acts in your life. When did God seem closest to your heart? Write down as much as you can of your specific story of God's presence and work in your past.

God's Presence in My Life—Part II – Reviewing the Present

1. Read prayerfully Ps 139

Make a list of all things the Psalmist says God knows about his present life. What does this lead him to think and do? Ponder the awesomeness of God's knowledge and omnipresence. How do you think the sure sense of God's presence, and the realization of God's knowing all aspects of his existence affected the Psalmist's present life and decisions?

Now, read again Ps 139 as an expression of your own thoughts to God: Are you happy about the way, the Lord created you, and do you praise Him for that? (vss. 13-16);

Can you say, “I am still with You”? (vs. 18).

2. Read again prayerfully Isa 41:8-16; 43:1-5; 44:1-5; 21-23

Reflect—Keeping in mind the truth that the Lord knows all about His children (Ps 139), reflect upon the meaning of God’s declarations made to Israel:

“Do not fear” (Isa 41:10)
“Do not be dismayed” (Isa 41:10)
Why do you think the Lord asked them to not fear?

“I am with you” (Isa 41:10)
“I am your God” (Isa 41:10)
“You are Mine” (Isa 43:1)
“You are My witness” (Isa 43:10; 12)
“You are precious and honored in My sight…” (Isa 43:4)
“I love you” (Isa 43:4)
“I blot out your transgressions . . . and remember your sins no more” (Isa 43:25)
How do these statements sound for the fearful and failing Israel?

3. Apply

Now, knowing that God knows all about us, what do you think would be your evaluation of your present life? While reflecting at your life, find a quiet place and picture yourself in the presence of God. While reading the passages from Isaiah take God’s words as addressed to you directly. Do not forget; God still loves you in spite of your past and present. Be honest while facing the reality of your life at the present moment. Record in writing what you think is His as well as your
evaluation of your present. Where are you now? Do you have some fears? If so what are your fears?

Then, think of God’s statements written above at nr. 2 and respond in faith to Him. Add to the list the following:

Return to Me; “Return to Me for I have redeemed you” (Isa 44:22; see also 45:22)
Rejoice (Isa 44:23)

- Over God’s Presence in the past which means salvation (Isa 44:22).
- Over God’s Presence in the present, that means belonging to Him (Isa 41:10).
- Over the Promises of God’s Presence for the future which means victory, and protection (Isa 41:10-14).

How does God appear to you now, and what do you feel about Him?

What are the present evidences of God’s presence in your life?

What are the two to three things you think God would like you to commit to doing daily in order to enjoy His presence in your life every day and every moment?

Thought for Meditation

One Sabbath, only a few weeks before she (EG White) breathed her last, she said to her son: “I am not worried at the thought of dying. I feel comforted all the time that the Lord is near me” (LS, 444). “I am guarding every moment, so that nothing may come between me and the Lord. I hope there will not” (LS, 447).

God’s Presence in My Life—Part III – Envisioning Your Own Future

1. **Read prayerfully Jer 29:11-14**

God’s plans for Israel are the only plans that contain “prosperity,” “hope,” and “a future” (Jer 29:11). As you ponder the Word of God think what God’s promises meant for Israel as they were facing the future, and what they mean for you as you are facing your own future?

Focus on the following promises:
- “You will call upon me . . . and I will listen to you” (Jer 29:12)
- “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (vs. 13)
- “I will be found by you” (vs.14)
- “I will bring you back from captivity” (vs. 14)

How are God’s promises from Jer 29:11-14 to you?

2. **Reflect—Now, read again Isa 41:8-16; 43:1-5; 44:1-5; 21-23 and concentrate on God’s promises for the future:**

- “I will strengthen you” (Isa 41:10); “I will uphold you” (Isa 41:10)
- “All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced” (Isa 41:11)
- “I will help you” (Isa 41:13)
- “You will rejoice in the Lord and glory in the Holy One of Israel” (Isa 41:16)
- “I will be with you” (in trials) so “the rivers will not seep over you . . . the flames will not set you ablaze”(Isa 43:2)
- “I will give men . . . and people in exchange for your life” (Isa 43:4)
- “I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring” (Isa 44:3)
Our Lord also attended events of celebration. When He started His ministry He attended along with His disciples a wedding in Cana, where He transformed the water into wine (John 2:1-11). Though He came to die for the humankind He let people understand through word and His presence that joy and celebration are part of His message and His kingdom. Jesus taught that a sinner who turns back to God in repentance produces celebration in heaven (Luke 15:7-10).

The Old Testament Life of Faith
Jon Paulien (2003), states that Old Testament faith was centered on God, not on human. True faith is centered on what God does. It’s about putting God first in our lives. The bottom line of Old Testament faith was to keep the mighty acts of God constantly fresh in the minds of people. In Old Testament terms the proper response to the mighty acts of God was rehearsal, telling and retelling the mighty acts of God. But what does rehearsal or retelling really mean in practice? (p. 142, 143) Paulien suggests five different ways that the Old Testament saints rehearsed the mighty acts of God.

1. Through Verbal Recital
   The most obvious way that the OT saints rehearsed the mighty acts of God was to tell the story over and over during worship services, at school, when walking from place to place, when sitting around the campfire. A great example of this is found in Deut 6:20-25.

2. Through the Sabbath and the Feast Days
   (Deut 5:15).

3. Through Obedience
   For the Israelites obedience was never something isolated in its own right, it was always based on the mighty acts of God, particularly the Exodus (Deut 11:1-8). It is clear in this text that the retelling of God’s mighty acts is more than just verbal. It is summed up also in obedience to the laws of God. And every act of obedience was to be in remembrance of the mighty acts of God.

4. Through Ethical Behavior
   For ancient Israel the Exodus was the basis for all behavior. So the mighty acts of God also affected the way Israelites were supposed to treat people (Deut 10:19-22). “And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.” So they were to behave like God who rescued the aliens in the time of the Exodus. And if you know that God has brought you out from slavery with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, the next time you run into a slave you are likely to treat that person differently.

5. Through the Routines of Life
   The Israelites were to allow the mighty acts of God to be in their consciousness throughout all the routines of life (Deut 26:1-2).
The New Testament Life of Faith

In the New Testament these concepts are updated to the situation in which we find ourselves. Jesus Christ fulfills the entire life, experience, and history of the Old Testament and its people. All of Old Testament Israel’s history and experience comes together in the Christ event, in Jesus Christ at the cross. And everything in the New Testament era points back to Christ as the ultimate mighty act of God.

How can we live in the light of God’s mighty acts for us? How can we celebrate the cross in the Twentieth Century? Jon Paulien gives again five suggestions:

1. Through Sharing the Gospel

2. Through the Ceremonies of the Church
A second way we can rehearse the mighty acts of God in today’s world is by performing the traditional ceremonies of the church just as they celebrated the feasts in ancient times. These ceremonies are baptism, the Lord’s Supper. By celebrating the “feasts of the church,” such as baptism and the Lord’s Supper, we can rehearse the mighty acts of God in a dramatic fashion.

3. Through Obedience
Romans 12:1

4. In How We Treat People
In Old Testament times we noticed that people were to treat aliens the way they had been treated by God in Egypt. God’s action toward us become the model for how we are to treat other people. Matt 25:40: “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’” Through His sacrifice on the cross Jesus became identified with the human race. So when we treat somebody well we treat Jesus well, and when we mistreat people we do that with our Lord who died for them.

5. Through the Routine Activities of Life
The key to avoiding the ups and downs in Christian experience is to bring the mighty acts of God constantly into the everyday routines of life.
But how can we do that? Life for most people is an endless round of eating and drinking, waking and sleeping, working and resting.
Peter recognizes that the normal way of life is empty, meaningless. His solution is the precious blood of Christ. It is the mighty act of God on the cross that puts meaning into life, that gets rid of the emptiness.
“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers” (adapted from the book Meet God Again for the First Time).

Celebrations in Everyday Life
- Wedding: Judg 14:10; Matt 22:2-3; John 2:1-11
- Birthday: Matt 14:6; Mark 6:21-22;
The People of Israel celebrated God's Mighty Acts

- Celebrating God's gifts of harvest at the Feast of Pentecost and Tabernacles:
- Celebrating their deliverance from slavery in Egypt
- Passover: Exod 13:3; see also Exod 12:14; 23:15; 34:18; Num 9:2; Deut 16:1
- Celebrating the deliverance of the nation through Esther
  Purim: Esth 9:18-19

Religious Celebrations

- The bringing of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem:
  2 Sam 6:12-15; 1 Chr 15:27-28
- The bringing of the ark of the covenant to the Temple:
  1 Kgs 8:3-6; 2 Chr 5:4-6; 2 Chr 5:12-13
- The completion and dedication of first Temple: 1 Kgs 8:63, 65-66; 2 Chr 7:8-10
- The dedication of the second Temple: Ezra 6:16
- The reading of the Law after the building of the walls of Jerusalem: Neh 8:9-12
- Christians celebrate the death of Christ and His return: 1 Cor 11:26

Celebration in Heaven

- Creation: Job 38:4-7
- When a sinner repents: Luke 15:7-10
- The Divine deliverance through Jesus: Rev 19:15
- The downfall of evil: Rev 19:1-5
- The final triumph of Jesus Christ: Rev 19:9; see also Rev 11:16-18; 15:2-4

Seminar #26
Seventh Week – Salvation By God’s Presence – Sharing God’s Presence
Worshiping And Watchfulness

Worship

Jesus Himself reemphasized and obeyed the Old Testament command, “Worship the Lord your God” (Matt 4:10). It is the duty (and privilege) of all people to worship their Creator. “Come, let us bow down in worship,” says Ps 95:6, “Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” God clearly expects us to worship (Whitney, p. 86).

To worship God is to ascribe the proper worth to God, to magnify His worthiness of praise, or better, to approach and address God as He is worthy. As the Holy and Almighty “God, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe, the Sovereign Judge to whom we must give an account, He is worthy of all the worth and honor we can give Him and then infinitely more. We cannot encounter the worthiness of God without the response of worship. If you could see God at this moment, you would so utterly understand how
worthy He is of worship that you would instinctively fall on your face and worship Him” (Ibid., p. 87).

“There are some graces and blessings that God gives only in the ‘meeting together’ with other believers. On the other hand, no matter how fulfilling or sufficient our regular public worship celebration seems, there are experiences with God that He gives only in our private worship” (Ibid., p. 92-93).

Just as worship begins in holy expectancy, it ends in holy obedience. If worship does not propel us into greater obedience, it has not been worship. To stand before the Holy One of eternity is to change. . . . To worship is to change” (Foster, 173).

**Defining Worship**

Worship is “the praise, adoration and reverence of God, both in private and public. It is a celebration of the worthiness of God, by which honor is given to His name. . . . Worship is turning to God in awe, praise and joy, as his people realize how wonderful He is. **Prayer is a natural part of worship:** to know God is to want to worship him and pray to him” (*Thematic Reference Bible*, p. 2030).

“To worship is to be fully occupied with the attributes of God—the majesty, beauty, and goodness of his person, powers, and perfections” (Boa, p. 86).

**God Alone Is to Be Worshipped**

- He alone is worthy of worship (1 Chr 16:25; Ps 48:1; 96:4-5; 145:3; 2 Sam 22:4)
- The worship of God the Father (John 4:23; Rev 14:7)
- The worship of God the Son (Matt 2:11; 14:33; John 20:28; 28:16-17; Phil 2:9-11; Heb 1:6; Rev 5:8-14)

**Angels Worship God** (Ps 103:20; 29:1-2; 148:1; Isa 6:1-4; Rev 4:8-9)

**The Worship of Other Gods Forbidden** (Exod 20:3; Deut 5:7; 2 Kgs 17:35-36)


**The Worship of Angels Forbidden** (Col 2:18; Rev 19:9-10; 22:8-9)

**Reasons for Worship**

The supreme reason for human existence is to worship God for His love, greatness and saving acts.

- We worship God because He alone is worthy (Rev 4:9-11; 5:9-14)
- We worship because it gives us the opportunity to minister back to Him (1 Sam 3:1-10)
- All nations are exhorted to worship God (1 Chr 16:28-29; Ps 29:1-2; 96:9)
- Worship is a divine command (Exod 23:25; 1 Chr 16:29; Ps 22:23; Matt 4:10; Rev 14:7)
- Israel is commanded to worship God (2 Kgs 17:36; see also Ps 95:6-7; 99:4-5)

**Worship Is a Response of God’s People**

“Worship is our love response to Him” (*A Discipleship Journey*, p. 103).

- To God’s love (Exod 4:31; Deut 6:5; Ps 95:6-7; 138:2)
- To God’s Holy Presence (1 Chr 16:29; Ps 96:8-9)
- To God’s greatness (Ps 95:1-3; Ps 66:1-4; Rev 15:3-4)

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Worship Based on Biblical Principles Is Imperative
True worship is not the mechanical repetition of the rituals, but should be wholehearted and reverent. It should be based upon trustful and obedient lives, in that obedience is itself to be seen as an act of worship.
- Worship must be in “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24)
- Worship must give God the honor due to Him (1 Chr 19:29; Ps 96:89)
- Worship must be orderly and reverent (1 Cor 14:40; 1 Kgs 18:30-39)
- Worship must be grounded in godly and obedient living (Mic 6:6-8; Rom 12:1-2)
- Honesty without hypocrisy, characterize acceptable worship (Amos 5:21-24; see also Matt 15:7-9; Mark 7:6-7; Isa 29:13; Luke 18:9-14; John 4:24)
- Worship of mere human devises is unacceptable (Isa 29:13; Lev 10:1-2; Mark 7:6-7; Phil 3:3; Col 2:23)

Proper Attitude of Worshipers
“God calls for worship that involves our whole being. The body, mind, spirit, and emotions should be all laid on the altar of worship” (Foster, 169).
- Preparation for worship is necessary (1 Cor 11:28; 2 Sam 12:20; Matt 2:11)
- Wholeheartedness is requested (Exod 34:14; Deut 10:12; Ps 86:12; Mark 7:6-7)
- Confidence in approaching God is mandatory (Heb 11:6; 10:22-23)
- Reverence and humility characterize true worship (Heb 12:28-29 See also Ps 5:7; 95:6; 138:2; Eccl 5:1)
- Fear—deep respect—to God must be present (Gen 28:16; Ps 33:8; Mal 3:16; Rev 14:6-7)

Some Physical Expressions in Worship
God created us in such a marvelous way that we may worship Him with our entire being; heart, soul, mind, and strength, and express our love to Him through the use of our voice and body. Throughout Scripture we find different ways of physical expressions in connection with worship:
- Bowing (Ps 95:6; Deut 26:10)
- Kneeling (Ps 95:6; 1 Kgs 8:54; 2 Chr 29-30; Eph 3:14)
- Falling prostrate (Neh 8:6)
- Singing (Ps 33:1)
- Shouting (Ps 95:1)
- Lifting hands (Ps 134:2)
- Musical instruments (Ps 150; 1 Chr 15:28)
- Stillness (Ps 46:10)
- With our hole heart (Ps 111:1)
- With all that is within us (Ps 103:1)

The Biblical Elements of Worship
Worship is not a simple act or form; it is a complex response of the soul to God in adoration, awe, praise, thanksgiving, and prayer. It includes also joy, trust, confession of
Worshiping God Will Continue for Ever in Heaven (Rev 4:10-11; 5:13-14; 7:11-12; 19:4-5)

Places of Worship
- Worship at a Place Chosen by God (Deut 12:13-14; Gen 22:2; 1 Chr 21:18-19)
- Worship in Certain Sacred Places (Deut 12:5; Exod 3:12; 1 Sam 1:3; Isa 27:13)
- Worship at Tent of Meeting (Exod 25:8-9; 29:42-43; 33:10)
- Worship at the Temple in Jerusalem (1 Chr 22:1; Neh 8:20; Luke 1:8-10; 2:37)
- Worship in the Home (Dan 6:10; Matt 6:6; Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:5)

Earthly Location for Worship is Unimportant (John 4:21-24; Gen 24:26-27; 47:31; Judg 7:15; Job 1:20)

Hindrances to Worship
True worship can be hindered by superficiality, by temptation, by sin, by wrong relationships, and directly by the evil one who works through all these ways.
- Worship that is merely formal is unacceptable (1 Sam 15:22; Isa 1:13-17; Ezek 33:31; Hos 6:6; Matt 6:5; 2 Tim 3:5)
- Worship is hindered by sin (Ps 66:18; 32:5-6; Isa 29:13; 59:2; Jas 4:3)
- Worship is hindered by wrong relationships (Isa 1:11-17; Amos 5:21-24; Matt 5:23-24)

The Results of Biblical Worship
True worship does not only represent what is due to God—the spiritual response of His people to His immeasurable love, holiness and greatness—but also, it results in unspeakable and essential benefits for God’s people.

True Worship Brings Unique Divine Blessings (Exod 23:25-26)
- Conviction of sin (Luke 18:13; Isa 1:17)
- Guidance (Acts 13:2-3; Num 7:88)
- Deliverance (Acts 16:25-26; 2 Chr 20:20-29)
- Joy (1 Chr 29:21-22; 2 Chr 29:30; Ps 43:4; Isa 56:7; Luke 24:52)
- A sense of God’s presence—as we worship, God dwells in the midst of His people’s praise (Ps 22:3; 2 Chr 5:13-14; 1 Kgs 8:10-11; Exod 40:34-35)
- Release God’s power into our life and circumstances (2 Chr 20:1-30; Ps 149:1-4)
- Allows God to share His heart with us (Acts 13:1-2)
- A deeper sense of Jesus Christ’s Lordship (Phil 2:9-11; Rev 1:10-18)
- Forgiveness, atonement for sin and righteousness (Isa 6:1-8; Luke 18:14)
- Transformation of Character (Isa 6:1-8; 2 Cor 3:18)
- Salvation (Ps 51:12; Luke 23:42-43)
- Boldness to witness (Acts 4:31; 18:9-11; Ps 51:13; Ps 57:9; Isa 6:1-8)
Steps to Cultivate the Heart of a Worshiper

- Ask God to give you a heart of worship for Him.
- Commit to live a life set apart (holy) as a worshipper (Ps 15:24).
- Cultivate a heart of worship by seeing God’s character in Scriptures in His names, titles and attributes. Worship Him for who He is.
- Learn to quickly give God thanks (for what He does) and praise Him (for who He is) when you see Him move on your behalf in the midst of your day.
- Practice offering God sacrifices of praise when you don’t feel like worshiping.
- Keep your sights set on the picture of worship in Rev 4-5, recognizing that your destiny is before the throne of God worshiping with people from every tribe, language, people and nation (Rev 5:9-10).
- The more you see God the more you will desire to worship Him. And the more you worship God the more you will desire to see Him.

(David Buehring, p. 105)

“The Son of God came to this earth to reveal the character of the Father to men, that they might learn to worship Him in spirit and in truth” (CT, 28).

Seminar #27
Seventh week – Salvation by God’s Presence – Sharing God’s Presence
Worshiping and Watchfulness

Spiritual Discipline-Watchfulness

“Watchfulness is the state of being alert and expectant; watching over someone in one’s care or waiting for the arrival of someone important or for some significant event. Scripture lays particular emphasis on the need to watch for the second coming of Jesus Christ” (Thematic Reference Bible, p. 2023).

The expression used in Greek is “gregoreo”. The meaning is “to be awake,” “to keep watch,” “to watch.”

We learn and understand the meaning and the importance of watchfulness from the Word of God, when we look to the watchfulness of God and that of His Son Jesus Christ. God’s watchfulness is “the Lord’s alertness to the needs of His people, His constant care, for them, and His awareness of the power and evil intent of their enemies” (Ibid).

Jesus did three important things to help us understand the meaning and importance of watchfulness:
- He asked His disciples to watch (Matt 26:40-41)
- He gave them six illustrations in six parables on watching (Matt 24:42-25:1-46)
- He took them with Him and sowed them how to watch (Matt 26:36-46)

In speaking about the signs of the end, Christ’s admonitions to “take heed” or to “watch” constitute the recurring theme of Matthew 24 and 25. To illustrate the importance of remaining alert, Jesus spoke six parables; three in chapter 24 and the other three in chapter 25: the Porter (Matt 24:42), the Master of the House (vss. 43, 44), the Faithful and Unfaithful Servants (vss. 45-51), the Ten Virgins (chap. 25:1-13), the Talents (vss. 14-30), and the Sheep and the Goats (vss. 31-46).
The main idea Jesus conveyed by these parables is that, “Christians are not to await their Lord’s return in idle expectancy. This state of waiting has a very active form; ‘While waiting and watching they are to be vigilant in purifying their own souls by obedience to the truth, and to be earnest in working for others’” (Matt 24:42) (SDAC, 504-505).

“Keep watch with me,” said Jesus to the disciples. To ‘watch’ means literally, ‘to stay awake,’ but here means to remain awake for a purpose, and that purpose is to share Christ’s vigil” (Matt 26:38, SDAC, 525).

“Watchfulness also suggests a preparedness in order to avoid being taken unaware by an enemy (Ps 127). It involves fighting carelessness to reach a desired goal” (Prov 8:34; see Neh 4:9; 7:3).

“Both Paul and Peter issue the command to be watchful, to stand against the evil one” (see Eph 6:10-17; 1 Pet 5:8).

**Watch and Pray.** “Paul urges churches to pray with unfailing perseverance. The actions of watchfulness and prayer are indissolubly united. Prayer is an act of vigilance and vigilance a consequence of prayer (Eph 6:18-19). Vigilant watchfulness is a manifestation of genuine spiritual life” (Ibid).

“Watchfulness and wakefulness are synonymous in some texts. The antithesis of being on the alert is to be asleep (metaphorically). Thus the church at Sardis is exhorted to awaken (Rev 3:2-3). Being awake and therefore ready for the coming of the Lord is mentioned also in Rev 16:15), where the opposite attitude will result in being ashamed when the Lord comes” (Dictionary of the Letter NT, 1199).

**Ellen G. White Comments on Watchfulness**

**God Requires Watchfulness**

“God requires of his ministers purity of soul, holiness of heart and life, constant watchfulness, and almost unceasing prayer” (RH, August 10, 1862, par. 5).

**Need of Watchfulness**

“There is need of constant watchfulness lest selfishness obtain the supremacy, lest you yourselves become the center, and you require attention, care, and interest, which you feel under no obligation to bestow upon others” (AH, 159).

“There is need of constant watchfulness and of earnest, loving devotion, but these will come naturally when the soul is kept by the power of God through faith” (FW, 38).

**Constant Prayer and Watchfulness**

“Our only safety is in constant watchfulness and prayer. The nearer we live to Jesus, the more will we partake of His pure and holy character; and the more offensive sin appears to us, the more exalted and desirable will appear the purity and brightness of Christ” (CH, 623).

**Blessed Results of Watchfulness**

“By watchfulness and prayer, he may so guard his weakest points that they will become his strongest points. Through the grace of Christ, men may acquire moral stamina, strength of will, and stability of purpose. There is power in this grace to enable them to
Watchfulness and Character
“You will exercise a ceaseless watchfulness over your defects of character, and will cultivate right practices in little things. The difficulty of overcoming will be lessened in proportion as the heart is sanctified by the grace of Christ” (SD, 115).
“Only by constant watchfulness and persevering and almost unceasing prayer shall we be able to exhibit in our life the character of Christ or the sanctifying influence of the truth. Many drive Christ from their families by an impatient, passionate spirit. Such have something to overcome in this respect” (1 T, 303).

Results of Neglecting Watchfulness
“It is the neglect of watchfulness and close searching of heart that leads to self-sufficiency and spiritual pride. Without a deep sense of our need of help from God, there will be but little earnest, heartfelt prayer for divine aid” (RH, October 11, 1881, par. 1).
“The enemy will manufacture difficulties and create influences by which to discourage and overcome you if possible. But by watchfulness and prayer and faith in Christ you may be victors” (HS, 144).

Divine Watchfulness
- **The Lord’s Watchfulness Over His People in Danger or Trouble** (Ps 121; Deut 32:9-10; Ezra 5:5; Jer 1:12; Zech 9:8)
- **The Lord’s Watchfulness Means that His People’s Needs Are Met** (Ps 146:9; Gen 28:15; Deut 2:7; Job 10:12; 29:2-3; Jer 24:6-7)
- **The Lord’s Watchfulness Means that He Hears His People’s Prayer** (Ps 34:15; 2 Chr 6:20; 1 Pet 3:12)
- **The Lord’s Watchfulness Is Seeking Out Those Who Have Gone Astray** (Ezek 34:16; 1 Pet 2:25)
- **People Are Vulnerable Without the Lord’s Watchfulness** (Ps 127:1; Ezek 34:11-12)

Watchfulness of Leaders
Leaders are called to be alert to the needs of those they serve, and also to the dangers that surround believers in the world. The Old Testament teaching on watchmen provides an indication of the importance of watchfulness and the responsibility of those called to be watchful.

Leaders Are Required to be Watchful
- Over their own lives (Acts 20:28-31)
- Over the lives of others (Ezek 3:17; 33:7-9, Acts 20:28)
- Watchmen Who Fail to be Watchful (Isa 56:9-12; Ezek 34:1-10; Zech 10:2-3)
Watchfulness is God’s Plan and Requested by Him (Isa 62:6-7; Matt 26:31)

**Watchfulness for Dangers** (1 Pet 5:8; Prov 4:23)
- The danger of false teachers or false teaching (Matt 7:15; 24:4; Mark 8:15; Rom 16:17; 2 John 8)
- The danger of temptation (Matt 26:31; Mark 14:38; Luke 12:15; 17:1-3; 1 Cor 10:12; Gal 6:1)
- The danger of neglecting the Word of God (Deut 4:9; Josh 22:5; Heb 2:1; 12:25)
- The danger of damaging the Lord’s work (Neh 4:9; 7:3)
- The danger of speaking sinfully (Ps 39:1; 141:3; Prov 13:3; 21:23; 1 Pet 3:10)

**Watchfulness for Blessings** (Ps 59:9; 123:1-2; 130:5-6; Mic 7:7; Luke 2:25, 36-38)

**Watchfulness and Prayer** (Col 4:2-3; Matt 26:41; Mark 14:38; Luke 21:36; Eph 6:18)

**Watchfulness for the Return of Jesus Christ** (Matt 24:42-44; 25:1-13; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 12:35-40; 1 Thess 5:4-8; Rev 16:15) To keep watch for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ means to be ready for His coming.

**Watchfulness for Opportunities to Serve the Lord** (1 Pet 3:15; Eph 5:15-16; Col 4:5-6)

**Watchfulness for Opportunities to Serve Others** (Eph 6:18; Matt 26:36-40; Gal 6:10)

**Contrast with the Watchfulness of Unbelievers with Evil Intent** (Ps 37:32; 10:8; Matt 26:16; Mark 3:2; Acts 9:24)

**Warning Against Neglect of Watchfulness** (Rev 3:2-3)
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**Watchfulness for Blessings** (Ps 59:9; 123:1-2; 130:5-6; Mic 7:7; Luke 2:25, 36-38)

**Watchfulness and Prayer** (Col 4:2-3; Matt 26:41; Mark 14:38; Luke 21:36; Eph 6:18)

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